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THE IDEALISM OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

BEING

THE BAIRD LECTURE FOR 1928

BY THE REV.

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PREFACE.

THE Baird Trustees, having done me the honour of appointing me to deliver this Course of Lectures, allowed me to attempt to treat, as the subject of them, of Christian Ethics, as a form of Ethical Idealism. The theme appeared to be entirely in keeping with the purpose of the Lectureship, as expressed in the Trust Deed of the Founder. It commended itself as of paramount importance, and of vital interest in these times. The fact that the contents of this treatise were delivered in the form of lectures addressed to a general audience, accounts to some extent for its method and style. The references which have been appended at the foot of the page are for the convenience of students of Ethics or Theology, who may desire to

pursue in greater detail topics which have been alluded to in the text; and the lectures are now published in fulfilment of the Founder's Bequest.

GEORGE WALKER.

ABERDEEN, *July*, 1929.

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CHRISTIAN ETHICS:

Its Scope and Presuppositions.

I.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS:

Its Scope and Presuppositions.

In a well-known chapter of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,"[1] Gibbon mentions the morality inculcated by Christianity and practised by its professors as one of the causes of its remarkable extension in the early days. The fact is undoubted, though few would admit that his estimate of the morality of the primitive church is fair or adequate. The purity and unselfishness of the lives of the Christians were in striking contrast with the practices sanctioned by the prevailing paganism. The ceaseless efforts of the leaders of the church to guard the Christian society against the contamination of heathen customs and traditions, bore testimony to the high standard of character and conduct which was set before those who confessed the Faith, and received by them as having the divine sanction of its Founder. The secular literature of the time

[1] Chap. XV.

demonstrates the fact that Christianity began its eventful history in an age of moral destitution and retrogression. From the beginning, it assumed an uncompromising stand against the corruption and degeneracy which threatened the disintegration of society. In subsequent centuries it had a large part in establishing those ideas of justice and humanity which have influenced the course of medieval and modern civilization. There had indeed been many teachers of Righteousness both in the West and in the East before the advent of Christ. Socrates had opposed the Sophists whose teaching as a whole tended to reduce the difference between right and wrong to a merely artificial and conventional distinction. According to Protagoras, man in his individual capacity is "the measure of the Universe," of what is true and false, of what is good and evil. If so, there could be for man no absolute goodness or justice in character and conduct. Socrates sought to found morality on a deeper basis than that either of the private interest of the individual or of social custom and convention. When on trial for his life, he claimed that he spent his time in persuading his fellow-citizens to give their chief care to the perfection of their souls, as immeasurably more important than physical welfare or material affluence. He informed his judges that "nothing better can happen to a man than to converse daily about virtue," examining himself and others, seeing that "an unexamined life is not worth

living." [1] The Grecian Schools, Platonic and Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean, developing different aspects of the many-sided teaching of Socrates, had each its following among the educated in the West. Gautama in India had instructed those who sought enlightenment from him in the Noble Path of the Holy Ones. In the land which was the scene of Christ's life and teaching, the Hebrew people had received from a succession of prophets a loftier conception of the Divine Righteousness than had elsewhere been attained. To them too had been imparted an unique moral education and discipline in the events of their national history. Yet withal at the time of Christ's appearance a sense of the moral bankruptcy of the age oppressed its more earnest and thoughtful spirits. Christ came at what has been described as "a moral crisis for humanity." As regards both the providential preparation for the Christian Faith, and in view of this consciousness of the moral failure of the past, He came "in the fullness of the time." In His Religion with its faith in God and hope for man, many found rest from the unsatisfying disputations of the philosophic schools. While it offered to men's minds its solution of the ultimate problems, it was associated with a type of life which approved itself to their moral aspirations. It was at once a Creed and a Life.

These two aspects of Christianity cannot be divorced from each other. What man sincerely

[1] See "The Apology," 30 and 38.

believes regarding God, His character and will, must determine for him that which he holds to be right in human character and obligatory in conduct. While, however, the Christian Creed and the Christian Life imply each other, it is possible to direct our attention more particularly to Christianity in its practical aspect and requirements. The task of Christian Theology has been defined as the effort "to state and to defend as true the convictions which are distinctive of Christianity as an historical religion, and which give inspiration and character to the Christian life."[1] The special province of Christian ethics is to show what that life is in itself and in its manifold relations to God and others. The sphere of Christian ethics is therefore not confined to an exposition of the actual words of Jesus, whom it accepts as the greatest of ethical teachers. To His language and example indeed continual recourse must be made in all questions of Christian virtue and rectitude. Yet a distinction may be drawn between the actual instruction imparted by the living teacher and the latent wealth of meaning in it, which time alone could unfold. A study of the Ethics of Jesus may confine itself to an exposition of the principles of moral truth which He announced in His teaching and illustrated in the incidents occurring in His ministry, and which He exemplified in the circumstances of His life. The Ethics of Christianity, based upon those permanent and universal principles,

[1] W. Adams Brown, "Christian Theology in Outline."

embraces the implications contained in them, and the inferences and deductions from them, in which His mind and will are interpreted so as to bear upon the moral problems, personal and social, which arise in new forms from age to age.

The province of Ethics, whether secular or religious, is character and conduct. It inquires into the significance of such familar terms as the Good, the Right, Virtue, Duty. The subject of primary interest and importance in every ethical system is the account it gives of man's highest Good, his supreme End and aim, that which enlists his desires and endeavours as the realisation of all that is best in life for him. It is that to which all other purposes and aims *ought* to be made subsidiary, that in which man finds his true life, that in whose attainment he fulfils his destiny. When that *Summum Bonum* of human existence is known, it furnishes the criterion of what to man is good and right, of virtue and duty. It supplies the test of the relative worth of all particular aims and motives, of all those principles of conduct and habits of action, which make his character what it is. If it can be shown that there is such an End, such an Ideal, whose intrinsic worth outweighs in value all other objects of possible choice, it must be his chief interest and duty to seek that End and ensue it. Aristotle has defined the distinction between ends which are proximate and relative, and that which is thus ultimate and supreme. He says, " If in what we do there be some end which we wish

on its own account, choosing all others as a means to this, but do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for so we should go on to infinity, and desire would be left void and objectless)—this evidently will be the Good, or the Best of all things. And surely from a practical point of view it much concerns us to know the Good; for then, like archers shooting at a definite mark, we shall be more likely to attain it."[1] St. Paul had such an end in view when he said, "This one thing I do"; forgetting the things which are behind, he pressed toward the mark, making its attainment his supreme purpose and end.[2] In the light of that end, when accepted as his chief Good and Ideal, man sees what he is, and what he ought to be, and the meaning and significance of his experience as a moral agent is disclosed. The question whether life is worth living is answered by the knowledge of what that is which is worth living for. As the Science of the chief Good, the Ethical End, with its self-evident claim upon man's desire and will, ethics endeavours to explain the reason and meaning of our moral judgements as to what is right and wrong, by establishing the standard by which all moral values are to be estimated. Its contention is, that men live aright and fulfil the purpose of their being in so far as their character and conduct are in accordance with the moral Ideal which it is its part to indicate. Thus as a normative science it deals

[1] "Nic. Eth.," I. 2. [2] Phil. III. 8, 9, 10, and 13.

with human character and life, not merely as they are, but as they ought to be. It takes for granted that it is the duty and vocation of man to realise in himself, in his actions and in his social environment, that which *ought* to be.

The answers given to the question as to that in which the End, or supreme Value in life consists, have been various, according to the prepossessions and attitude to life of the individual inquirer. The ideals of life entertained by men at different periods, in different social conditions, at different stages of moral culture, have differed much from each other. The Buddhist with his pessimistic ideas of the world, views the highest good in a different light from the Mohammedan with his theistic fatalism. For the one it is extinction of desire; for the other, it is attained through submission to the will of God. In our western civilization, the prevailing aims in life are remote from the Grecian ideal of an existence spent in philosophical leisure and the contemplation "of things noble and divine," the life which, Aristotle says, "alone is desired solely for its own sake, seeing that it yields no result beyond the contemplation," while practical activities, which have as their object material progress or the acquiring of wealth, ending in what results from them, and therefore is beyond themselves, are on that account classed as inferior.[1] The systems of the ethical teachers of ancient and modern times may thus be classified

[1] "Nic. Eth.," Bk. X. 7.

according to their theories of the ethical End. There is the end as presented in the Schools of Rational Idealism, or as defined in various forms of Hedonism, or as set forth in the Ethics of Evolution. Christianity has its distinctive manner of contemplating man's chief end and highest Good. It is the claim of Christian Ethics to set forth the true goal of human life, affording a true interpretation of man's moral experience, and presenting in its totality the highest type of human worth, the completely developed human character. Its moral Ideal is that in which is attained the full realisation of man's true self. If this claim can be substantiated, it follows that the Ethics of Christianity surpasses other systems and theories of the Good in character and conduct, as that which is true and complete surpasses that which is partial, tentative, and provisional.

When St. Paul came to Athens and daily carried on his work of Christian propagandism in the Agora, "certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics encountered him." It was a meeting of the representatives of three different forms of belief, and of the exponents of three diverse theories of the moral life. The two chief philosophies of life then current were here brought into contact with the system which was destined to exert a wider and deeper influence than either of them upon the course of moral thought and practice in the future. It might indeed be said that in the ethics of these three systems are found the germs of all subsequent ethical thought.

Man, said the Epicurean, is mainly a sentient being. As sensation, the capacity to feel, was in his view the primal element in the human constitution, the experience of pleasure which is the highest good of a sentient being, must be the chief aim of man and constitute the end for him. Here, as always, ethical theory is based upon a certain view of the essential nature of man, and ultimately upon a certain belief regarding the Universe. Epicurus (*d.* 270 B.C.), accepting the Materialism of Democritus, acknowledged no spiritual principle in man. Matter associated with sensation accounted according to him for human life and experience. For such a being as man therefore "pleasure is the beginning and the end of the blessed life." In the well-known Epistle of Epicurus to Menœceus, which is a summary of his ethical philosophy,[1] he says, "exercise thyself in the things which bring happiness; for verily while it is with thee, thou wilt have everything, and when it is absent, thou wilt do everything if so thou mayst obtain it." The feeling of pleasure is held to be the good which for man is "first and cognate with his nature,"[2] the object of all his desires and hopes, the end of all his actions. The pleasure which is thus viewed as the end of man's existence is his own pleasure. Even friendship, though productive of the social virtues of kindness, gentleness, consideration, doing good to another, seems to be valued as a means of

[1] See Wallace, "Epicureanism," pp. 126 ff.

[2] *ἀγαθὸν πρῶτον καὶ συγγενικόν.*

assuring one's own satisfaction; yet at the same time it was held that in a perfect friendship, love of the friend was as strong as love of self.[1] The pleasure, however, which according to Epicurus is the object and end of life is not merely the feeling of the moment, but a life of happiness on the whole. "Wherefore prudence, or practical judgment on such matters, is a more precious thing even than philosophy: from it grow all the other virtues, for it teaches that we cannot lead a life of pleasure which is not also a life of prudence, honour, and justice; nor lead a life of prudence, honour, and justice, which is not also a life of pleasure." John Wesley's estimate of prudence was different, when he said that there could be no fitter subject for a christian man's prayers than to be delivered from what the world calls "prudence"! The part of reason, according to the view of Epicurus is to be the minister of, and guide to pleasure. The refinement of his idea of pleasure is, however, evident in his preference of the pleasures of the mind to those of the senses, and in his representing the best condition of man as not tumultuary enjoyment, but a state of body and mind, in which there is freedom from trouble and pain,[2] a state of health and serenity. Man has a positive and disturbing need of pleasure only when the consciousness of its absence brings him pain. He is wisest who can forego without complaint the pleasure which is harmful or out of his reach.

[1] Zeller, "Stoics," etc., p. 467. [2] *ἀταραξία καὶ ἀπονία.*

While not denying the existence of the Gods, Epicurus considers that he greatly promotes man's happiness by disproving the possibility of their interference with human affairs, as being, according to his view, inconsistent with the peacefulness and blessedness of their life. One of the benefits which he professes to confer upon his followers is their emancipation from all superstitious terrors, and from all expectation of either rewards or penalties in a future life. In this theory of life and its chief end, there is no reference to any sanction proceeding from a higher sphere, no outlook beyond the present life and its interests, upon a realm of absolute truth and righteousness. It derives its principles and sanctions from that of which man is immediately conscious in a sensuous experience of pleasure and pain.

It is characteristic of many ethical systems that they seek for the Moral Ideal and for the reasons why men should aim at it within the limits of the nature and experience of man as he is. This is the case with the Hedonism of Epicurus and his followers in ancient and modern times. The end of Pleasure is given in man's own constitution. His supreme object and duty in life are to experience it in as great measure as fortune will permit. When fortune is against him, it is for him so to limit his desires to those things which are attainable, that in spite of circumstances he will still have pleasure, or at least untroubled tranquillity. Such a theory of duty and the Good,

has no cognisance of the transcendent and absolute Righteousness which constitutes for man that which is good or evil, and by which his character and actions are approved or condemned. It does not seek the source and prerogative of morality in a higher and superhuman sphere. That conduct is good which can justify itself as productive of the greatest and most enduring pleasure possible for the individual in the circumstances which fate has assigned to him.

Very different were the ethical doctrines of the Stoics, whom St. Paul also encountered. So far from holding pleasure to be the chief good, they denied that it is a good for man. Pleasure in their view is the end of the lower animals, but as merely irrational it can be no true end to man, whose essential distinction is reason, not feeling. It may be true that pleasure results from the life of virtue, but it is only a consequence, and constitutes no part of the end of reasonable action. It is something extraneous, having no moral value. All emotion or passion is alien to reason and therefore to man's true nature. It is an abnormal state, a perverted condition of the will, in which man is precipitated into conduct contrary to the reason in him and in all things. It is to be wholly eradicated,[1] in order that reason in him may always coincide with the Universal reason which constitutes the order of the world. That is right which is in accordance with the all-pervasive law or nature of things. The

[1] ἀπάθεια.

wisdom and duty of man consist in the complete assimilation of his reason and life to that pure and passionless reason and will of God. The objects that attract man as sensuous are often the cause of his setting himself in opposition to the universal law of his being. At best they are "indifferent." If pleasure is no good, pain is no evil. The wise man is raised above both the one and the other, as participating in the Universal reason which appoints all things for the best in a world which in its totality is perfect. The wise man alone is good. He is elevated above selfish aims and a patriotism whose interests are narrow and exclusive. He is a citizen of the world. The benevolence to all fellow-creatures implied in the cosmopolitanism of the Stoic is the outcome of his rational judgment as to his relation to all men alike. From all emotions, the wise man, as subject to reason alone, is free; for when an emotion is thus controlled and wholly mastered by reason, it ceases to be an emotion.[1] He is without vanity, because the praise or ignominy imputed to him by the opinion of others is nothing to him. He is above experiencing the emotional disturbance either of anger or of admiration. He eschews the sympathetic pity, in which there is suffering with those in distress, for those bodily pains and distresses which others commiserate are not evils in the eyes of one to whom there is no good save the life of virtue in

[1] Zeller, "The Stoics," etc., p. 237.

conformity with the divine Law of the Universe.[1] In the writings of Seneca occur many sentiments more nearly akin to Christianity than are attributed to the earlier Stoics. Such utterances led some of the Christian Fathers to claim him as at one with themselves ("our Seneca").[2] Especially in its later representatives Stoicism approaches much more closely to the Christian standard than the system which made pleasure the end of human desire and action. In its view of virtue as the highest good, in its universal benevolence, in its abolition of all national and social barriers between man and man, in its exaltation of duty above all personal inclinations, in its contempt of outward possessions compared with the inward riches of the mind and character, it gave currency to truths and precepts that attracted to it the sympathies of the Early Church. But the God of Stoicism, the World-Soul, is not a Being above, and apart from the world. He is merged in the world, the cause of all that happens, in whose perfection even evil has a place. The Stoics, in spite of their tendency to an ethical Idealism, were materialists, believing in nothing save what is corporeal. God is the active rational and orderly principle in the One substance; matter is its passive and mutable element.[3] There is a

[1] See Zeller, "Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics," Chap. X. Ueberweg, "Hist. of Phil.," Vol. I., p. 185 *et seq.*

[2] St. Jerome (see Lightfoot, "Philippians," p. 270).

[3] "Nempe universa ex materia et ex deo constant," Seneca, "Ep.," LXV.

wide difference between such a system and that which believes in a Supreme and all-wise Deity who orders all things aright because His nature is righteousness and love.

In seeking to determine what is man's end and highest good, secular or scientific ethics bases its conclusions on its theory of man's nature. Where man's nature is held to be primarily that of a sentient being, the ethics tend to be Hedonistic, with pleasurable feeling as the *summum bonum*. Where reason is held to constitute the essential prerogative of that nature, the ethical doctrine takes some form of Idealism. An ethical system may thus confine itself to the actual facts of man's nature and experience, without seeking for the origin or sanction of morality in any higher source.[1] The sphere of science is in the description and explanation of the region of man's phenomenal experience, whose unvarying order and laws it is its aim to discover. Secular Ethics as a branch of science limits itself to what is thus given in human nature, and from that endeavours to infer man's duty and the ethical end of his existence. Herbert Spencer imposes such a limitation upon man's ethical outlook when he says ("Data," p. 46) that "No school can avoid taking for the ultimate moral aim a desirable state of feeling, called by whatever name,—gratification,

[1] Leslie Stephen in "The Science of Ethics," pp. 7, 446 *et seq.*, explicitly makes this restriction.

enjoyment, happiness." His evolutionary ethics traces the stages of man's moral progress towards that condition of perfect adjustment of the individual to the social environment in which in his view true well-being consists. But he does so without reference to either intelligence or morality in the unknown, inscrutable Force behind the age-long process, which for the Agnostic takes the place of God. The ethics which is associated with a religious faith in the spiritual, transcendent and divine, on the other hand, connects its conceptions of the Good and the Right for man with an underlying belief as to the character of the Object or objects of man's worship. Even if man believes in divinities of an inferior moral type, he must consider that for him it is the good and safe course to act so as to please them. Their will or their caprice is to him the norm of the conduct which it is proper for him to follow. It is a fundamental tenet of Christianity that righteousness, moral perfection is of the very essence of the Ultimate Reality or God. The Right, the Good is for it that which is in accordance with the character and will of God, the Source of all order, both physical and moral, in the Universe. The ultimate end of man, his Highest Good, must therefore be his assimilation in nature and disposition to the Righteousness of God, and to the Divine character as set forth in Christianity. Christian Ethics does not construct its Ideal out of the facts of human nature as it is, but finds it in the life and words of Christ,

who in His person and actions is received as the moral image and representation of the divine Righteousness. The distinction therefore between a purely scientific theory of man's ethical life and the Ethics of Christianity is that the former derives its ideas of morality from the data of man's actual experience as interpreted by his reason, while the latter seeks to learn and interpret the Good as Christ has made it known in His person, His life, and His teaching.

It follows that there is a wide difference between Christ and other ethical teachers as regards their place and authority in the systems with which their names are associated. The followers of other moral guides have admired the genius and insight of those masters whom they reverenced as their instructors in the knowledge of the Good. The opinions of Zeno and Cleanthes were quoted with deference by the Stoics. The Epicureans exhibited in a still greater degree " the single mind, the single opinion." Philodamus declared that to write against the tenets of Epicurus, Metrodorus, and Hermachus was " not far short of deserving the punishment of a parricide." All the schools, however, were prompt to distinguish between the teacher and the teaching, between the Master and the System. So, too, in the case of the Religious Founders. Confucius repeatedly disclaims any special excellence in himself, other than the diligence of his search after moral truth. " The sage and the man of perfect

virtue,—how dare I rank myself with them?" "If there is any virtue I have not practised; if there is any righteous course of action I have known and not been able to pursue; if there is any fault I have not been able to correct,—these things are the cause of my sorrow." In the "Book of the Great Decease," Ānanda tries to obtain from Buddha, when his end drew near, his directions as regards the Order. But Buddha declines: "The Tathagata thinks not, Ānanda, that he should lead the Brotherhood, or that the Brotherhood is dependent upon him. . . . Therefore, O Ānanda, be ye lamps unto yourselves, be a refuge to yourselves. Hold fast the Truth as a lamp, hold fast as a refuge to the Truth." The Hebrew prophets were the moral teachers of their nation. They demanded without compromise obedience to the word spoken by them. But they reverenced their message because it was the word of Jehovah that came to them and through them. "Thus saith the Lord." While the Word had plenary authority as the declaration of God's will, the speakers confessed their personal fallibility and faultiness. "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Is. vi. 5). While they are the instruments of the divine utterance, they do not claim exemption from the evils against which it denounces the divine displeasure. "We are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf" (Is. lxiv. 6).

Those Hebrew pioneers of ethical truth and Gentile Founders of ethical systems believed themselves to have eludicated the moral facts of life and to have explained in what virtue consists. They did not conceive the value of the truth they uttered to be affected by imperfections and inconsistencies in themselves. It is with no such qualifications that in the ethics of Christianity Christ, its Founder, is held to stand in an unique relation to the mind and will of God, the Supremely righteous One. He does not, indeed, state moral principles in the form of arbitrary commands. He speaks to the consciences of His hearers, appealing to "the light that is in them." Yet "He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes." He further assumes the position of one who not only announced in words a new ideal of life, but who was Himself the embodiment of that ideal. He was conscious of no divergence from it in His own life. "Come unto Me, learn of Me." "I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life." For Christian ethics the life of its Founder is in character, in motive and in will morally at one with the divine and absolute Righteousness. John Stuart Mill, referring to this moral authority which has been so widely accorded to Christ, describes Him as one "who left on the memory of those who witnessed his life and conversation, such an impression of his moral grandeur, that eighteen subsequent centuries have done homage to

him as the Almighty in person."[1] Ethical Christianity receives Christ as the Moral Ideal of character in the full extent in which it could be realised in a human life at the time and in the circumstances in which Christ lived. In this sense it holds that, as Cyprian says, "Christ is given to us as our exemplar of life." But because of those conditions and limitations, the "Imitation of Christ" does not consist in the attempt to reproduce that life as it was lived literally and locally. It is the enlightened effort to apprehend the principles which He taught, to apply them in the infinitely diverse circumstances and conditions which arise in human experience, and to act in such a manner as is in accordance with the mind of Christ. "I am more and more convinced that the essence of Christianity and of righteousness and of all goodness is in this, in following Christ, in thinking, feeling, and acting (within our human limits) as He would have done."[2] The Good life is that which bears the likeness of the life of Christ, who is the image of the invisible God (Col. i. 15; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Heb. i. 3),—that which in some recognisable degree "is as He was in the world." "If Christ be in you . . . the spirit is life because of righteousness." "If any man is in Christ, there is a new creation." However much more these statements may involve, they at least imply that the self to be realised by man as his end and good is

[1] J. S. Mill, "On Liberty."

[2] Dr. John Brown to Ruskin, "Letters," p. 261.

the self whose character and motives and will are identified with Christ.

When we speak of the Ethics of Buddhism or of Islam, we mean that these forms of belief are associated with types of life in keeping with, and resulting from, their fundamental principles. If we compare the Ethics of Buddhism with Christian morality, we detect several apparent similarities between them. Universal love is inculcated in both. Kindness towards all, pity for the suffering, humility, are virtues of high excellence in both. To abstain from all sin, to abhor impure thoughts and acts, to injure none, to speak evil of none, to abjure covetousness and sensuality, to render good for evil, to be forgiving,—all this is common to the Light of Asia and the Gospel of Galilee. But a little consideration reveals the difference of motive and of significance in the moral qualities specified. The fundamental tenet of Buddhism is the utter and incurable misery of life. Its highest good is to effect one's own deliverance from the fate of rebirth by which when a man's sentient self is dissolved in death, his previous character, his actions, speech, and thoughts result in a new life inheriting for good or for evil his *karma*, which does not die.[1] It is man's desire, his clinging to life, which perpetuates the unending chain of existence in these successive lives. The extinction of desire,

[1] T. W. Rhys Davids, "Buddhism," p. 101 *et seq.*, "Karma." Oldenberg, "Buddhism," p. 242 *et seq.*

of all that attaches man to life is to be sought above all else ; for only thus can he put a final end to the chain of misery. The virtues of Buddhism are so many means of detachment from life. The virtues of Christianity are the means by which life is exalted and realised in its fullness. The " universal love " of Buddhism is different in its quality from that " love which is the fulfilling of the Law." The suppression of self in Buddhism is not the expression of a pure unselfishness which seeks to serve others and yields to the claims of others, " but rather the effort to withdraw oneself, for what are ultimately selfish reasons, from all connection with the world of existence around us." [1] This dependence of the ethical spirit and practice on the fundamental beliefs as to the nature of things and as to man and his life, is equally evident in other systems of morality which have coherence and consistency. In a pre-eminent degree this vital connection subsists between the Religion of Christ and the Ethic that is distinctively Christian.

It is true, indeed, that many of the elements of the Christian morality were known and practised in the ages before Christ. It is possible to find not a few of Christ's sayings anticipated by previous teachers. Christ did not undervalue the intuitions of the conscience of man, where that conscience had attained to enlightenment and insight. The

[1] H. R. Mackintosh, " Originality of the Christian Message," p. 168.

Science of the Good had been enriched by the contributions of many seekers after truth, and illustrated in the lives of those who wrought righteousness in many lands. Many modern ethical writers who do not base their plan of moral life on religious faith, would doubtless claim that their views of the Good Life are not inconsistent with the teaching of the New Testament. Mill says, "In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility."[1] Yet in virtue of the honour Christ gives to moral qualities which elsewhere have been held in less repute, in the combination and proportion in which the qualities He requires exist in the character which receives His approbation, in the motives which He commends, and in the evils which call down His special condemnation, He was the Founder of a morality which in its distinctiveness and originality justly bears His name, and belongs to His Religion. As that religion stands by itself among the faiths of the world, so do its practical issues in character and conduct result in what is characterised as the Christian life. All the beliefs which compose the Christian creed have an ethical bearing on, and significance for, the life of man, his character and conduct. They determine the special Christian meaning which is attached to such ethical conceptions as the Good, the Right, moral law, and obligation. The Christian Moral Ideal, as set forth in the character and teaching of

[1] "Utilitarianism," p. 24.

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the Founder of Christianity has been illustrated in the principles and conduct of those who have been inspired by His Spirit and example. Its ethical import is learned from the Books of the New Testament, which record the sayings and life of Christ, and the impression He made upon the minds and characters of His disciples. Whatever views may be entertained as to the authorship of these books or as to the literal accuracy of their reports of the words and acts of Christ, it is not disputed that they contain the Christian tradition, and express the ethical convictions and attitude of those living in the earliest age of the Faith. The same great Christian tradition has had its exponents in subsequent times. There have been an unfolding and a progressive apprehension through the centuries of the contents and implications of the ethics of Christianity. Much may be learned of its import from the influence it has exerted on men's ethical beliefs, and from the practical effects of it, wherever it has, in a sincere and enlightened manner, been received and practised. It reveals its quality in the manner in which it has affected personal behaviour and social relations. It is embodied in a greater or less degree in Christian insitutions, in Christian legislation, in those elements in our civilization which have been affected by its spirit. All know in a general way what is meant when we speak of a Christian character, a Christian motive, or a Christian act ; and a study of Christian morality in

its source, in its principles, and in its subsequent manifestations and applications, enables us to use these expressions with the insight and discrimination derived from an adequate appreciation of the ideal of Truth and Beauty and Goodness which Christianity has brought into the world.

The Ethics of Christianity which has had a place of unique importance in the moral history of mankind, is a subject of vital concern at the present time of unsettlement and confusion, when the tendency is prevalent in many quarters to abandon the traditional ethical standards, and to organise human life and conduct on an altered basis. A changed attitude is extensively manifest towards beliefs, both theoretical and moral, which once were questioned by very few and tacitly taken for granted by most. Eucken has impressively remarked [1] that whereas morality was once regarded as "a tower of strength in the midst of the doubts and conflicts of life," as "a matter of unquestionable certainty," it now "has been drawn into the wave of disintegration which is passing over men's minds. Formerly the scientific definition and accurate conception of morality were matters of contention; but now it is the fundamental idea of morality that is questioned." When Edmund Burke said that "vice loses half its sinfulness when it loses all its grossness," the sentiment was generally repudiated as singularly improper. In our time to many the enormity and

[1] "Present Day Ethics" (Eng. Trans.), p. 61, 1913.

anomaly of vice or sin have ceased to be subjects of profound concern. This down-grade movement which had been visibly proceeding during the latter half of the last century, has been accelerated by the European War. Beliefs and principles held sacred in former times have been subjected to the strain and dislocation it has occasioned. Their validity and sufficiency are assailed by a criticism often embittered by the disillusionments of recent years. Men have witnessed the too obvious failure of traditional institutions, the inability of the resources of a nominally Christian civilization to prevent calamities whose possibility had been foreseen, but whose actual occurrence was not seriously contemplated by most people. Things had gone far enough in the direction of a revolt against the cherished convictions of the past even before the end of the century, when Friedrich Nietzsche (*d.* 1900) found a following on the Continent prepared to applaud such utterances as these: "Our old morality belongs to Comedy." "There is an old delusion called good and evil." The old Tables inscribed with the Commandments 'Thou shalt not steal,' 'Thou shalt do no murder,' must be broken in pieces. "Your love of your neighbour is only a bad form of your love of yourself; rather do as I counsel you, flee from your neighbour and keep love at the farthest distance." The traditional morality is the invention of the weak, who have tried to get the better of their oppressors by making

goodness and virtue consist in submissiveness, good faith, self-control, in those qualities they are themselves compelled to exhibit. The value set on these "virtues" by Christianity, brands it as a form of "slave-morality," according to Nietzsche. His ideal is not the life of self-sacrifice for the sake of others, but that of the Superman who "lives dangerously," of dominating will-power and superb physical and mental energy, self-assertive and unsparing in the pursuit of far-reaching ends. Of such is the higher race which is destined to inherit the earth; while the meek must minister to its dominance, in submission to the right which might confers. It is thus that Nietzsche inverts morality, and places himself "on the further side of good and evil."

While the Ethics of Christianity could not have been evolved, and indeed cannot be fully appreciated, apart from the Religion of which it is the practical outcome, its study does not require to be prefaced by an elaborate statement of the tenets of the Christian Faith, as a preliminary to a review of it. The ethical teaching of its Founder, which includes a large part of His recorded sayings, was not delivered by Him in any logical order; nor was it associated by Him with any formulated theological system. Still less does Christian Ethics base itself on any merely sectarian form of belief. There is an essential and catholic Christianity which lies behind its outward divisions, and is deeper than all sects and parties. Belonging to the essence of Christianity

are its belief in God, its view of the nature of man, its distinctive sense of sin in human life, and its conviction of the reality and far-reaching moral significance of the operation of the Divine Spirit in human experience. Such beliefs are essential to, and characteristic of, the Christian Faith, and they are the fundamental presuppositions of the Christian Ethic.

(1) It is based on the Christian belief in God. The character and will of God constitute the ultimate standard to which character and conduct in man are referred, because in God is the perfect realisation of the Ideal Righteousness. Kant says,[1] "The principle of morality is a law for all rational beings which have a will." But unlike man, "the Supreme Intelligence is incapable of any maxim which is not also an objective law," and accordingly the holiness of God, while it does not place Him above moral law, renders it impossible that He should violate His own nature by volitions inconsistent therewith. He is above the often painful moral constraint which, for a finite and imperfect being such as man, is involved in the terms *duty* and *obligation*. In other words, goodness is not good because God wills it to be so: God wills it, because perfect goodness is the sum of all the moral attributes of His being. In earlier times, morality and duty for man were held to be arbitrarily dictated by the declared will and commandment of God. Whatever He was believed to

[1] "Critique of Prac. Reason" (Watson, "Phil. of Kant," pp. 269-70).

have enjoined, was held to be morally justified, whether His utterance were the Ten Commandments, or the command to slaughter the Amalekites, both man and woman, infant and suckling; whether the order were that man should love his neighbour, or that Abraham should sacrifice his son. The righteousness of the command was believed to be determined by the authority of Him who imposed it. The Old Testament contains the record of an increasing knowledge of the character of God; and in dependence upon this deepening insight in Israel's conception of its God, there was an increasingly enlightened apprehension of the nature of that righteousness which God required in man. This simultaneous advance reached its culmination in Christianity, for which Judaism was both the religious and the ethical preparation. Christ taught that God is no tribal or national Deity, but the Father in Heaven whose righteousness and love are perfect. "Neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father"—"God is Spirit." "Ye shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." The significance for morality of such an ethical Theism is apparent.[1] In the polytheism of Greece as in that of India to-day, men could find a precedent in some of their deities for the grossest vices, which thus obtained a divine sanction in their eyes, equally with the virtues supposed to characterise other members of their pantheon. Aphrodite was as

[1] Knight, "The Christian Ethic," p. 23.

divine as Athena, Siva as Vishnu. The God of Christian Faith commands the absolute reverence of man, as wholly righteous and perfect in goodness and in truth.

(2) The Fatherhood of God implies that man's nature is spiritual and akin to God ; in all members of the human race there are the same moral nature and similar ethical potentialities. The belief in man's filial relation to the divine Father in heaven is fundamental in the ethical teaching of Christ. The essential affinity of the divine and the human natures underlies the Christian belief in the Incarnation. Because of this affinity God can enter into man, and assume a personality, which is at once human and divine. The moral attributes of the Deity could be manifested in a human form in Christ. Many even of those who underestimate the importance of the doctrine of the Duality of the Natures in one Person as defined in the Ecumenical Creeds, believe that in Christ man's nature became the abode of the Divine Life. The moral purpose and goal of Christianity in regard to man's life are its uplifting and ethical transfiguration in virtue of its participation through Christ in the divine nature and character.[1]

(3) In the Christian view of man's moral condition and Task, *Sin* has a place and significance such as no other ethical system attributes to it. No other scheme of morality sets the fact of human sin in

[1] 2 Peter I, 4.

the light in which in Christianity it is defined and condemned. Very decisively did the Founder of Christianity discriminate between moral Transgression and ceremonial neglect or irregularity. This distinction was not made in the primitive tribal forms of morality, in which it was believed that the displeasure and vengeance of the Deity would be as surely incurred by ritual oversight or innovation, as by treachery or high-handed wrong-doing. Even in some forms of Judaism the distinction tended to disappear. It is characteristic of Christ's attitude to the Law that He insisted on this difference in the most emphatic way. "Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. ix. 13). Like the great Prophets of the Old Testament He relegated ritual ordinances to a position of minor importance. He allowed to such usages a relative value, when performed in a pious spirit. "These things ye should have done, and not left the other undone." When there was any opposition between the ethical and the ceremonial, the latter must always give place to the former. It was thus that he dealt with those formal restrictions with which tradition had surrounded the keeping of the Sabbath. He based the observance of the Fourth Commandment on the ethical principle that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." He denounces those forms of casuistry by which moral obligations were evaded on the pretext of obedience to the letter of the law

or the tradition. He scorns the pious fraud by which the Fifth Commandment to honour parents was circumvented by the subterfuge of designating what might have been given for their support as Corban, dedicated to God.[1] Part of Christ's controversy with the Religion of His time was that, though professedly zealous for the divine command, it made it of no effect through its blindness to the true nature of good and evil. It was scrupulous about tithes of mint and anise and cumin, but careless of the weightier matters of justice and mercy and faithfulness. He separates by a great interval what is temporary, national and traditional, from what is permanent, ethical and universal.

In the teaching of Christ a similar emphasis is laid upon sin as an inward condition of the soul. It is not merely an aberration in the outward conduct. He denounced the blind followers of tradition and the letter of the Law, because their righteousness was external and often hypocritical. He likened them " to white-washed sepulchres which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of putridity and uncleanness." Sin is inherent in the wrong desire which never issues in action, in the wrong motive though it be not carried out in deeds. Its extension to such inward states of thought and feeling marks an ethical attitude which does not exist in the lower and tribal stages of moral development. There is in them no sense of a demand for moral rectitude " in the inward parts " (Ps. li. 6), for the

[1] Mark vii. 11.

clean heart and the right spirit within. Neither the tribe nor the tribal deity takes cognisance of what is within the heart. In the ethics of Utilitarianism the ultimate test of both motives and conduct is their tendency to cause pleasure or pain. Bentham asserts that "there is no such thing as any sort of motive that is in itself a bad one." He says that the pleasure consequent upon an action is "while it lasts, and before any bad consequences arrive, as good as any other that is not more intense."[1] Even Mill implies that a good character, apart from its inherent dignity whose worth he would recognise, is to be valued because it is a kind of guarantee that one's life and conduct will be beneficent in their results. On these grounds there does not seem to be any reason why a character that is selfish or sensual or dishonest should be pronounced bad, save in so far as such a character tends to reveal itself in action, and to become a centre of confusion and unhappiness in its social environment. Kant on the contrary asserts that "a man's will is good, not because the consequences which flow from it are good, nor because it is capable of attaining the end which it seeks, but it is good in itself, because it wills the good." It is like a jewel shining by its own light and of absolute value, even though through adverse circumstances, and "by the niggardly provision of a step-motherly nature," it should achieve nothing,—a view diametrically opposed to

[1] "Princ. of Morals and Legis.," Chap. X., p. 12.

that of the consistent Hedonist as to what is good and what is evil in man's volitions. In Evolutional theories of Ethics man's moral backwardness and failures, however much to be regretted, can only be regarded as the symptoms of his imperfect development and adjustment as a social animal. They result inevitably from the insurgence in him of the propensities inherited from his pre-human ancestors. They are atavisms whose source is in a savage past. They are the evidence that his rational and social principles have not yet acquired sufficient power to curb those basilar and self-seeking instincts which are opposed to them. This, as has been said, is to explain away sin as "good in the making."

Psychologists have recently given much attention to abnormal phases of the mental life, to the derangements of the moral self, and have inquired as to the methods by which they may be rectified. They have much to say regarding the mischief and unhappiness commonly caused by "repressed morbid complexes" in the subconscious mind. It is shown how instincts innocent in themselves are liable to disastrous perversions issuing in deplorable disorders of conduct. A distinction is drawn between a pathological condition of the character necessarily issuing in abnormal conduct, and the state of those who are responsible for their actions; between moral disease and sin. It maintains that there is a wide moral difference between the kleptomaniac and the man who deliberately lives by theft. In the one case the

natural instinct of acquisition may be so morbidly developed that its victim is positively unable to resist the impulse to appropiate what is not his. In the other, though tempted, the man could abstain if he chose. The New Psychology deals with these and other aspects of the inner life in a manner that sheds light upon the nature of sin. It can show how different classes of those whose outward transgression is the same, should be respectively treated, —whether as subjects of a pathological derangement, who desire to be cured, or as criminals who have made evil their good. Does not Christ Himself make this discrimination in the compassion with which He received certain offenders who came before Him? "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The New Psychology views much which has been called sin in the character as a morbid condition, calling for pity rather than penalty. Yet it would give the name of sin to actions which result from determinate choice of what is wrong. Even in the victims of moral disease, it admits that the deranged condition in many cases has originally been voluntarily induced. When a man is responsible for his evil habits and character, they are as truly sinful as the actions which are both their cause and their consequence.[1]

Sin, according to the Christian view, is present in that character or intention or action in which the

[1] See Hadfield, "Psychology and Morals," pp. 44, 51.

self sets itself in opposition to the will of God which is the norm of absolute righteousness. It is a want of both inward and outward conformity, due to an abuse of man's freedom. It is revealed in a selfishness and self-will which both in spirit and in practical issue are destructive of the true relation between God and man, and between man and man. The seat of sin is in the will itself. It is not ignorance, according to Socrates' theory that virtue is knowledge. Man may "know and approve the better, yet follow the worse." It is not mere folly or unreason, as in the Stoic doctrine that virtue consists in the wisdom of discerning, and living in harmony with, the universal reason which regulates the world. By St. Paul, sin is represented as the deliberate rejection of what man knows regarding God and the Good.[1] "Even as they *refused* to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind." Men are taught the "ordinance of God" by their natural conscience. Those who have no written Law have the law "in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith." When the will dissociates itself from what is known to be the will of the Supremely Righteous Being, it subjects itself by its own act to the power of motives and impulses which are the occasion of sins of conduct. Through the force of habit it acquires an increasing facility in what is wrong. The fact that every member of the race makes the wrong choice implies a derangement, greater

[1] Romans I. and II.

or less, of the inner life, which is universal. This universality, however, does not prove the necessity of sin, which would involve the denial of moral freedom. Yet Paul's profound analysis in Romans vii. asserts a dominating power of sin in human life, which, however it originated, interferes with, and limits, man's Freedom. Experience testifies to the impeding effect of the sin which closely besets man (Heb. xii. 1). While moral freedom is a fact of consciousness, no less does consciousness witness to the moral thraldom of the sin which has become habitual; "so now it is no more I that do it, but sin which dwelleth in me" (Rom. vii. 17). Man's sinful state is thus shown to be an abnormal condition to be traced to an alien control within him, to which, in his own past or that of the race, he has surrendered himself. As it has no necessary affinity with his nature, the latter can be rectified, and emancipated from that domination. None of the essential elements of that nature is sinful in itself. Each has its place and function in the constitution of his moral personality. His sinfulness lies in their disorganised condition, arising from the undue strength of some, from their want of order, subordination and proportion. Augustine says, "All nature in so far as it is nature is good; in so far as it is corrupted, it is evil."[1]

St. Paul, the truth of whose account of sin in man's nature is not dependent on a literal acceptation of

[1] Quoted in "The Spirit," ed. B. H. Streeter, p. 177.

the narrative of the Fall in Genesis, points to such a misuse of freedom as results in an impairing of the freedom which has been abused (Rom. vii. 19-24). Through man's transgression of the imperative of the Right (the Commandment), sin enters. The knowledge and approval of the Good may remain with him, but they become increasingly ineffectual as ethical motives in opposition to the constraint of the law of sin which his lower and sensuous nature obeys, if it be not overruled by "the law of his mind." He has brought himself into this captivity. It is this vice-like grasp of evil on man's nature which constitutes the moral tragedy of human life. It is recognised in the facts of human history as well as in the reflections on human life in literature, in drama, and in fiction. But in no system of ethical thought are its reality, its implications and its consequences so fully taken account of as in the Christian interpretation of man's moral experience.

(4) The Ethics of Christianity assigns to Divine Grace a function of paramount importance in the moral life of man. As it recognises in sin an unique and mysterious potency tending to the destruction of his character and the subversion of righteousness, so it attributes an indispensable part in man's moral restitution and in the rectifying of his moral disorder, to a countervailing agency, whose scope is the progressive restoration and reorganisation of the individual character, and the moral elevation of the race. In its ethical system, the fact of Grace is the counter-

part of the fact of Sin. The state of the inner life as affected by sin, is abnormal, contrary to man's true nature. But the elements of the character can be restored to their true harmony and economy by the Divine Power acting within it. The moral Hopefulness of Christianity is inspired by the belief in the ability of this Power to overcome all obstacles and to manifest a might in the spiritual sphere similar to that of creative omnipotence in the world of nature. It entertains a firm faith in a moral renovation and attainment which apart from such a reliance would be unwarranted. The attitude of Christ towards the morally "down and out" revealed an optimism which never despairs. The Friend of publicans and sinners did not belittle their faults, but believed that through the agency of the divine power a future of righteousness might be theirs. Since God cared for them all, humanity even as it was in them was not beyond redemption. St. Paul expresses this moral optimism of Christianity when he says, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20). For the operation of this divine power making for righteousness there are claimed an efficacy and extent which are limited only by the capacity of man's nature to respond to its incentives. Its source is not within but from above man's individuality. Eucken says regarding what he calls the autonomy of the spiritual life that it "can only develop where a movement reaches man from the Universe, embraces him and

determines his future course."[1] Christianity more explicitly traces the source of this movement to the gracious will of God. How God can secure the eventual prevalence of good over evil without destroying the liberty of individuals is a problem for metaphysical or theological inquiry. Christian Ethics abides by the conviction that man's moral experience in its totality proves the reality of this constraining agency. It holds that facts of capital importance in that experience are left out of account by the ethics of Naturalism, when it attempts to explain the moral life and its attainments from beneath, without reference to a higher environment, and to a besetting Presence acting in man's life from a transcendental and spiritual sphere. The Ethics of Christianity postulates both human freedom and divine grace as facts equally verified by the moral consciousness of man, however they may in thought be reconciled with one another. Divine Grace, both in its restraints and constraints, does no violence to his moral nature, but acts in him in accordance with his reason, freedom, and responsibility. It makes use of the means and methods by which his character and conduct are ordinarily influenced. It employs the intellectual, emotional, and conative elements of his nature in accomplishing its results. Sin in man's will causes the disorganisation and disintegration of his nature. Grace whose source is above, acting within the rational and ethical

[1] "Present Day Ethics," p. 48 (Williams & Norgate).

personality, enhances and invigorates that in it which ought normally to be prevalent. The work of grace is the reorganisation of the inner life, the reconstruction of the true self—the Christ-self in man, "The image of God." It evokes latent possibilities in his nature which apart from it would remain in abeyance. It assists the development of capacities of Good which without it would not have matured. It has been compared with the subtle influence exerted by an inspiring teacher upon the minds of those under his tuition, and with the moral impulse imparted by fellowship with a person of strong and elevated character. One, long since departed, was recognised by all who knew him as a person of an unusally benevolent disposition, while of quite ordinary capacity otherwise. He had in his younger days come under the spell of the personality of Dr. Thomas Chalmers, and been associated with him in his philanthropic projects. Half a century after his leader's death, he used to recall that, when in his company, he always had the consciousness, as he said, of being "much better and more clever" than at other times. Such an experience, which is by no means singular, is analogous to that enlargement of life, that enhancement of moral power, caused in human nature by the operation of "Grace," to which Christianity attributes an indispensable function which is ignored in purely secular theories. If one human personality can influence another in the direction of righteousness, so as to be instrumental in

effecting a radical and beneficent change in the trend of its destiny, much more, it may be argued, can such a result be effected by the action of the Divine in a human being. So vivid has been this sense of the transforming agency of a Higher Power in the experience of many, that it has impressed itself on their consciousness as the true cause of all that is best in their life. This conviction is expressed in St. Paul's words, " By the Grace of God I am what I am"; and also in St. Augustine's devout question, " Quid habemus quod non accepimus ? "—" What have we that we have not received ? " [1]

[1] Art. " Grace " by Prof. H. R. Macintosh (" Encyclo. of Rel. and Ethics ") ; Art. " The Psychology of Grace," by C. W. Emmet (" The Spirit," ed. B. H. Streeter).

II.

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THE ethical aim which Christianity sets before man is the assimilation of his life and character to the divine. "Ye shall be perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It represents this perfect Righteousness as having been manifested in the life of Jesus Christ. Christianity teaches that man was made "in the image of God." Man fulfils his moral destiny and attains the end of his being in proportion as that moral likeness is reproduced in him. So far as he realises in his life the righteousness of God in Christ, he realises his true self. This is for man that wholeness and fullness of being, than which there can be for him as an individual no higher or greater Good. It has been remarked that wholeness or completeness is the object to which every form of life tends by an inevitable impulse as its End. Even a physical organism when injured or diseased tends to rectify and complete itself by repairing the injury or by expelling the disease. It is thus that wholeness or health is the end of the life of the body, wholeness or holiness is the end of

the soul.[1] The ideal state for all life is that in which it realises a condition of inward harmony and completeness according to its nature and kind. The chief and absolute Good for man as God's offspring is the life in which he realises himself in God, the perfectly Good.[2]

For man as an individual the ethical End is thus a personal good. In seeking it, his ultimate object is not an external acquisition. What he aims at is to be the person in whose life this full and complete good is accomplished. This personal interest indeed enters into all conduct in which men have in view some object to them desirable. They pursue it, even though it be some external and material thing, because its attainment appears to them to be the means of the enrichment and enlargement of their life in some way, because its acquisition would effect such a change for them as to cause them to be in the state in which they desire to be. The chief or highest good for us is that in which we thus conceive that we most fully become the self we seek above all to be. The main theme of ethical inquiry is as to this Chief End or ultimate Good. Its interest and importance centre in the answers it gives to the question as to the end, the *summum bonum*, of man as a moral person, in what it has to say regarding the Highest

[1] See Hadfield, " Psychology and Morals," p. 61.

[2] See note, p. 79 below.

Good for him, and therefore regarding the character of the self which it is his moral vocation and task to realise. Christianity proposes a distinctive type of life as its Ideal. It says that so far as he aims at that, he becomes what he ought to be, his true self, its attainment being the full stature of his ethical personality. This is, in the words of St. Paul, "the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 14). Under the conditions of man's life in this world, it is the progress and approximation towards this end which immediately concern those who thus "seek the things which are above." The moral vocation of each is to increase his original endowment to the largest measure of his capacity. It was this growth and progress that were commended in those who received the five talents and the two talents. The man with the one talent was condemned, because he set before himself no larger attainment, and achieved no increment in that with which he had originally been gifted. Christianity contemplates for the individual a "growing up in all things into Christ," in whom its ethical Ideal is realised.

Now this process of becoming what man ought to be, this realisation of his true and complete self, implies a Community in which the latent possibilities of his moral personality are unfolded. Man is, by the conditions of his life, a member of society, with social instincts and capacities, and with a nature which cannot be developed and come to itself save in a life of fellowship and of manifold

relations with his fellow-creatures. An individual conceived of as living to himself alone, as a unit isolated from others, does not live the life of man. To discuss either the intellectual or moral state of such a being is not to deal with human nature as it exists or could exist, but to conceive of it in an abstract manner and under purely imaginary conditions. From the dawn of human existence, human beings have been members of the social spheres of the family and of the tribe. They have not lived self-contained and self-sufficient lives, in a state of atomic independence of each other. They individually grow into their rational and moral personality through association with their kind. While each has his own life to live, his own destiny to accomplish, the sphere of his life and actions is in the society of which he is by nature a member, with its common interests and aims. "Through society is personality actualised . . . . Society is the condition of the development of a personality" (T. H. Green, "Proleg. to Ethics," pp. 200, 201).[1] Through the common life of the social fellowship pervading all its members, there is in them a similarity amid their individual diversity. Each finds his own good in the good of the whole. He participates in the

[1] "A being who like man is a little higher than the animals, a little lower than the angels, can only realise his own life in so far as he realises the life of the society of which he is a member."—J. H. Muirhead, "Elements of Ethics," p. 172.

benefits of whatever strengthens and enriches the life of all. The common spirit, beliefs, purposes of the social environment enter into the individuals, and from their influence they cannot exclude themselves. The inclusive End, the highest Good of all, embraces the highest Good of each.

There is thus a profound ethical significance in St. Paul's comparison of the Christian fellowship, consisting of all who are constituted one society by their common relation to Christ, with the connection and mutual dependence of the members of the body. He anticipates the tendency in our time to view the bond between the individual and society as an organic relationship. St. Paul, speaking of the Christian brotherhood, says, "Even as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same function, so we who are many are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another" (Rom. xii. 4, 5). "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again, the head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you." "And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, or one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. xii. 21, 26). Each separate life is united in an organic manner with the life of the whole. The Christian ethical End is one, being the supreme good of all and of each. But corresponding to the personal and the social sides of human life, the Christian End is to be viewed in a two-fold aspect, according as it has special reference (*a*) to

the personal character of the individual, or (*b*) to the social life of the community of which he is a member.

The supreme good of the *individual* soul is its realisation of its true self in that right state of the inner life, that fullness of life, of which Christ spoke when He said, "I am come that men might have life, and have it abundantly" (John x. 10). "Life" in the sense here implied is the end to be sought by each, as that which it was the purpose of Christ's coming to enable him to attain. To the *social or collective* aspect of the Chief Good Christ referred when He said, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. vi. 33), as that common end to the realisation of which the aspiration and efforts of all are to tend. As a kingdom or realm, it is collective and inclusive. But when to the Kingdom as the object of earnest quest, He adds "His righteousness," we may view the latter term as expressive both of the righteousness of the Kingdom as a whole, and of the personal righteousness of each of its members, as having that "life" which He came that they might possess. The character of the *individual* life which is in accordance with the Christian Ethical Ideal is that which possesses Righteousness in this large and inward sense. The Kingdom of God, as the sphere in which this Righteousness is increasingly realised, is the end in its *social and inclusive* aspect, numbering in its citizenship all those individuals who seek God's Righteous-

ness, and embracing in its comprehensive unity all the true values of life.

The Ethical End in its Individual Aspect.

For the individual with his own personal destiny to fulfil, the End is Righteousness in Christ's sense of the word, the "life" of inward integrity of the heart, of the rightly ordered soul. The ethical aim for each is to have his life in such accord with the life of Christ, that in its inward constitution and elements it is formed and oriented after the type of the divine Ideal in Him. It is the supreme end and Good of man to be that self, to have that inner "life," which realises in him and for him the purpose of his perfectly righteous Creator. "Life" is the gift of God, the Fountain of Life; the Highest Good for man is "life" at its highest and in its fullness,—"that he may have it abundantly." Thus "righteousness" and "life" imply each other. God's Righteousness is the type and norm of that "life" which is "life indeed."

Matthew Arnold[1] exaggerates the contrast between the Righteousness of the Old Testament and Christ's conception of Righteousness when he asserts, without qualification, that "while the Old Testament says: *Attend to conduct:* the New Testament says: *Attend to the feelings and dispositions whence conduct proceeds*" (p. 68). A tendency did indeed manifest itself in Juda-

[1] "Lit. and Dogma," Chaps. III. and VII.

ism to lay undue emphasis upon a legal and forensic Righteousness. Christ condemned in the Righteousness of the Pharisees this bent towards formalism and towards the substitution of an outward honour accorded to the Law for an inward conformity of heart and mind with its spirit. On the other hand, in the Wisdom Literature, and in the writings of the Prophets and Psalmists, there is found an increasing perception that Righteousness consisted, not in a rigid and mechanical adherence to the letter of the Law, but in rightness of heart and purpose, in a rectitude which was of the "life." They looked forward to a time when the law should be written on the heart, when the people should be "all righteous." The Wisdom which imparts instruction in Righteousness, gives the promise, "Whoso findeth me, findeth 'life.'" (Prov. viii. 35). "In the way of righteousness is 'life,' and in the pathway thereof there is no death" (Prov. xii. 28). "Keep wisdom and discretion, so shall they be 'life' to thy soul" (Prov. iii. 21). "He is in the way of 'life' that regardeth correction" (Prov. x. 17). The righteous man keeps the divine ordinances of righteousness, "which if a man do, he shall *live* through them" (Lev. xviii. 5). The sphere of this Righteousness is deeper than the outward and visible side of man's life, and penetrates to the character and moral condition of the heart. "The sacrifices of the Lord are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart he will not despise." The righteous

man has not only "clean hands" but "a pure heart"; has not only "spoken truth," but "has not lifted up his soul unto vanity." The righteous are "the upright in heart." They invoke the inward scrutiny of the Righteous Judge "to search them and know their *heart*, and to try them and know their *thoughts*." When they have erred from that state of uprightness, the blessedness of the righteous is restored to those "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, unto whom the Judge imputeth not iniquity, and *in whose spirit there is no guile*." Thus even in the former age Righteousness came to be understood not merely as a scheme of conduct, but as rightness in the seat of life. It is truth in the inward parts, having its dwelling in the hidden part, in the heart (Ps. li. 6).

Now, as Matthew Arnold justly reiterates, it is this inwardness of righteousness which is the great concern of Christ—"He put things in such a way that His hearer was led to take each rule or fact of conduct by its inward side, its effect on the heart and character." "Jesus made his followers first look within and examine themselves; he made them feel that they had a best and real self as opposed to their ordinary and apparent one, and that their happiness depended on saving this best self from being overborne."[1] Christ emphasises even more than those before Him this inwardness of righteousness. He approved the response of the

[1] "Lit. and Dogma," pp. 66, 67.

scribe to the question as to the first commandment of all. "To love God with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the soul and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." He said to the man who evinced his appreciation of such a condition of thought and motive and desire, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God" (Mark xii. 33). It is not the cleanness of the outside of the cup and of the platter that is of first and supreme importance in His eyes. The prime requisite is to have "the inside clean, that so the outside may become clean also." The emphasis is laid on the state of the character and disposition, on the direction of motive and desire, on the right ordering of the inner life of the soul. Christianity unveils in its full significance this inward and vital Rectitude from which as from a living fountain "all holy desires, all good purposes, and all just works proceed." Thus in the Ethics of Christianity there is the consummation to which the moral and spiritual development through its patriarchal, and prophetic, and legal stages led the way. The morality of Christ, revealing the true meaning and import of the process of the moral education of previous ages, perfects and completes that conception of Righteousness which was "the great object of Israel's concern," the chief end and Good of man. Sidgwick[1] defines this "inwardness" of Righteousness, which he asserts to be a distinctive

[1] "Hist. of Ethics," p. 114.

feature of the Christian morality, as "an inwardness not merely negative, tending to the repression of vicious desires as well as vicious acts, but also involving a positive rectitude of the inner state of the soul."

Nor was this deeper view of Righteousness as a quality of the inner life of the soul confined to the loftier spirits of the Hebrew race. Socrates, as interpreted by Plato, had already with true ethical insight discerned and asserted it. The "Republic" of Plato, which professes to represent the teaching of Socrates on this subject, contains a profound inquiry into the nature of Justice, or Righteousness.[1] In seeking to define it, the Dialogue shows that "instead of dealing with a man's outward performance of his work, it has really to do with that inward performance of it which truly concerns the man himself — so that the righteous man will not permit the several principles within him to do any work but their own, nor allow the distinct activities of his soul to interfere with each other, but will really set his house (i.e. his self, his inner life) in order." Thus Plato finds the essence of righteousness in "the internal order, harmony and health of the soul." The just man is he who "really sets his house (i.e. his inner self) in order, and having gained the mastery over himself will regulate his own character. . . . He will believe and profess that the just and honourable course is that which preserves and assists in creating the aforesaid habit of mind . . . while on the other

[1] δικαιοσύνη.

hand he will hold that an unjust action is one which tends to destroy this habit." [1]

Christianity then completes and fulfils the truth as regards the inwardness of Righteousness for which the ethical thought of Judaism and of Greece had prepared the way. That truth has received its supreme statement and exposition in the Sermon on the Mount, the great compendium of the fundamental principles of the Christian Righteousness which is the "life" of the members of the Kingdom of God. Neither there nor elsewhere does Christ set forth His Righteousness in the form of a code or digest of the Laws of the Kingdom. The Discourse announces the principles which inform the "life" which is in affinity with the Kingdom of God, and which features His Righteousness. The inwardness of Righteousness, the infinite value of "the life," of the soul beyond that of all material things, the giving of the first place to first things in the life whose orientation is Godward, the vital importance of disposition and motive, the universal love and beneficence which are extended even to the ungrateful and the injurious, all those elements which together form the Christian Ideal of life and conduct, are there reviewed. It is the purpose of the Sermon, not to formulate ordinances and enactments, but to delineate the type of character of those who belong to the Kingdom, and the kind of "life" which qualifies for it.

[1] "Rep.," Bk. IV., 443.

What then does this Summary of Christ's ethical teaching show to be the personal qualifications for the Kingdom, and by what manner of inward spirit are its citizens characterised? They are the "poor in spirit" those who, conscious of their want of the only perfect and highest good, are set upon obtaining it. Others are not sensible of its surpassing value, and are unaware of their poverty and incompleteness without it. A sense of want is the necessary condition of attainment; it is indeed the first step towards the realisation of this Supreme Good.[1] It proves them to be in sympathy with it. Theirs is not the state of the self-centred and self-satisfied; theirs is the disposition of the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the sincere, the peace-lovers and peace-makers, those seeking the End. When it is said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," it is meant that they shall have realised in them this "life" of inner righteousness. It does not mean that they shall at once become complete in its possession, but that they shall progress towards the realisation of that true life of righteousness, which consists in the assimilation of their characters to God, whose nature is perfectly righteous; theirs is the righteousness of the prophets and holy servants of God, in whose reward they will share.

[1] Cf. Seneca, "Epistles," VI. "Et hoc ipsum argumentum est in melius translati animi, quod vitia sua quae adhuc ignorabat, videt."

Those who have made this inward and essential good their end are the preserving "salt of the earth," keeping the world of human society from moral decay and dissolution. Hence their responsibility to the world. The light that is in them will shine out from them, and it is their part to let it do so, that men may be won for the Kingdom of God by seeing their good works which are the evidence of its presence in them. The subject in which it resides is their secret soul, the inner life, which is being rectified in character and disposition; the outward effects of it are visible to all, advertisements of its priceless worth.

Christ spoke these words in the hearing of those belonging to a race which prided itself on the belief that a form of correct conduct toward God and man had been divinely imparted to it, " the form of knowledge and of the truth " given in the Hebrew Law. He therefore explains the relation of that vital righteousness, which is the great concern for Him and His followers, to that traditional code of legal and ethical ordinances. Nothing that was permanent and universal in the latter was abrogated in the new order instituted by Him, while the Righteousness which He taught completed and superseded the old, provisional system. The Scribes and Pharisees who opposed Him claimed to know the law and to be scrupulous in its literal observance. Christ asserted that there was a great deficiency in their interpretation of what true Rectitude meant. The short-

coming lay in the outward and casuistic character of the uprightness at which they aimed and in which many of them rested. There results an inevitable antagonism between their literalism and externalism and that inner and essential rightness of soul which He required. The representatives of the latter were liable to misconstruction and persecution "for righteousness' sake" in His sense of the word, on the part of those whose stand was on the lower and traditional level. In suffering this hostility, they participated in the lot of the great prophets, whose ill-treatment was due to their being in advance of their age, and to their loyalty to a loftier conception of righteousness than that to which the people of their time aspired. Christ at once deepens the import of moral obligation and extends its scope, as compared with the requirements of the Jewish Law. His righteousness consists not merely in the apparent consistency of man's acts with the letter of the Law, but in the right inward condition of the agent as viewed in the light of the divine Ideal. He condemns not merely the deed of murder, but the disposition of anger and hatred in which it has its origin. As the state of mind conducing to the evil act is particularly singled out for condemnation, those devoted to righteousness are specially warned to avoid being the occasion of such a frame of mind in others.[1] If one engaged in the sacred observances of religion, such as offering his gift before God's altar, remembers that he has given his brother

[1] Matt. v. 23-26.

cause of offence, it is incumbent upon him to interrupt even that devotional act and be reconciled to his brother, lest he suffer an antipathy to ripen into evil acts. It is his part to remove the root of enmity within another soul. Having the same regard to the inward state, Christ says that the sin of impurity is incurred in the heart, and righteousness is violated, even before any outward breach of the Seventh Commandment is committed. "Such sayings as this," it has been said, "gave a new extension to the conception of morals." That extension and deepening are characteristic of the Ethics of Christianity. In the prohibition of solemn oaths in ordinary conversation, while their profanity is reproved, there is also the insistence upon the necessity of an inward sincerity and truthfulness of character for which the "yea, yea" is a sufficient assertion, and the "nay, nay" needs no expletives. The old law of retaliation is abrogated altogether (the *lex talionis*), as implying a state of mind towards another, even though he has acted injuriously, which is wholly inconsistent with an inner rectitude of the heart as regards others. Hatred and enmity have no place in the rightly ordered life; rather than that by their admission they should destroy that just harmony of the soul with its divine Ideal, in which true righteousness consists, there must be a readiness to submit to indignities and to suffer injuries without reprisal. When it is remembered to what a great extent primitive justice consisted in the studied and

calculated avenging of injuries, considered as a bounden duty of the injured and those connected with him, the Christian prohibition of revenge is to be credited with having introduced a marked departure from the principles and practice of a large part of the human race. This also is true of the precept to love enemies, to be disposed to do them good. It is to follow the pattern of the absolute righteousness in God who sends His rain upon the just and the unjust, and makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good. While His antipathy to sin is absolute, His forbearance with sinners expresses itself in the unmerited benefits He confers upon them. In man, as in God, a right inward disposition as reflecting the eternal truth and fitness of things, can never find expression towards others in hatred, but always in an attitude of love and benevolence. The character and method of God Himself are the ultimate standard of a perfect righteousness; the attainment of the ethical End, the Ideal at which man must aim, is the righteousness of God. "Ye shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount proceeds to assert that in a righteousness which is inward and of the very being of the man, the motive decides the moral worth of the action. More than anything else, the object that most strongly appeals to him, moving him to action, forming the intentional end of his action, declares what he is. The moral judgment is passed, not primarily on the outward deed,

but on the inner disposition and motive by which it is determined. The deed may be beneficial in its results and laudable in the eyes of others ; yet the doer of it is not righteous, if his reason for doing it is self-interested or time-serving. Honesty may be the best policy. But, as has often been remarked, he who is honest merely because he is likely to gain thereby, is not an honest man at heart. Similarly Christ bids men beware of " doing their righteousness before men " (Matt. vi.) with a view to being seen by them, for so they have no reward with their Father which is in heaven. Such conduct, though formally right, has no moral value. Alms bestowed with the intent of winning the good opinion of men obtains in their applause all the credit it will ever receive. It is destitute of any goodness in the eyes of Him who can see into the heart. Sincere prayer is the expression and outcome of man's inward and spiritual relation to God. But prayer offered with the intention of obtaining a reputation for piety has its reward, such as it is, not from the Hearer and Answerer of Prayer, but in such celebrity among men as it secures. The vain repetitions in Gentile prayer, without a right inward attitude of spirit towards God, are mere babble in His sight. Fasting that parades itself before men, having no true penitence and self-humiliation behind it, is a worthless pretence. In all these cases the inwardness which is essential to true righteousness is wanting. And therefore men should make it their supreme end

to acquire that inward wealth of character which becomes theirs by their becoming in their inward life conformed to it,—that gain which is realised in what they become, that End whose attainment consists, not in acquiring any outward possession, but in being what they seek, those treasures which thieves cannot steal, and which neither moth nor rust can consume. That is to have a true scale of values in life, and to give that which is first and chief the first place in our estimation and endeavours. One who makes this righteousness of the inner life his supreme end, his *summum bonum*, is not deflected from its pursuit by having an equal eye to other objects of desire which compete with it. His is the single eye which gives light within. His is the single purpose devoted to the one object, unlike that of one who proposes to serve two masters and inevitably fails in the attempt. "Seek ye first, supremely, all-inclusively, the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." Set it before you as the chief good, the end, the object of absolute worth; and it is a reasonable assumption that under the rule of the righteous King the needful outward things which are accessory to success in this quest will be secured to you. The life which is devoted to the cultivation of God's righteousness is a life of trust in God. This inner rectitude of the self has not the self-confidence of the outward and Pharisaic righteousness, with which it has been contrasted in a previous part of the Discourse, and which passes

censorious judgments upon others. The self-righteous person, who is most forward to judge another, has often greater defects in himself than he whose shortcomings he condemns. He is like the man who attempts to extract the little chip out of the eye of another, while his own eye is blinded by a whole beam. The latter part of the Discourse as it is given in the First Gospel, with which should be compared St. Luke vi. 20-49, refers to various outward results in the life, which show what it is at heart. The good fruit is borne by the tree that is sound *at the core*. The good man bringeth forth that which is good out of the good treasure of his *heart*. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The test whether a man's inward being is right with God is his doing the Will; and the practical rule by which our actions towards others are to be regulated is an inward standard which every one carries in his own breast, and which can be applied by him in all circumstances —"Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." Plato had described the righteous man as one who "sets his house in order," after the pattern of the justly ordered State. The Sermon on the Mount which looks throughout towards the perfect Ideal of divine righteousness, ends with praising the wisdom of the man who builds his house upon the rock of the truth and righteousness of God.

In this manner Jesus explains the character of that inward life of righteousness which is the End

and highest Good of the individual. Whether the "Sermon on the Mount" is to be regarded as one address, or as a collection of His sayings uttered and possibly repeated on several occasions, it contains the delineation of the ethical quest and attainment, whose realisation is for man the absolute Good. Its interpretation of human life is at variance with that of those who find in pleasure and happiness the End, in view of which all the activities of the life are to be organised; and also with those whose moral ideal is discovered in man's own constitution as a rational being and does not require of him to look beyond himself to One in whom the absolute righteousness is actually realised. The End is being attained by men only in the proportion in which the moral perfection of God is being fulfilled in their characters. It is the complete life of the self or moral personality according to the pattern of its divine Source and Archetype. The Christian Ideal is not yet attained by man, but is above him. He can approximate to it only by being raised above what he at present is, by having his inner life progressively ordered and rectified in accordance with the character of the Divine Righteousness.

In view of this Christian End, the norm and Ideal of the individual life in Christianity surpass other attempts that have been made to define them; and the possibilities it contemplates for that life are correspondingly great. From these possibilities no one is excluded save by his own choice in adopting as his

some lower end. Hence it follows that in the ethics of Christianity a paramount value is attributed to every individual human being without exception, as either the actual or possible subject of so high a destiny. Its estimation of the worth of the individual, of a human being as such, transcends that of all previous systems. It learns from its Founder to discern the potentiality of "the life" in those whose natures may at the time show but few of its lineaments, and the promise of its future maturity in those in whom at the time it may exist but in germ. The American statesman said he often felt inclined to take off his hat to the poor boys he met, when he thought of the elements of future greatness that might be in them. Christianity similarly "honours all men,"[1] when it is true to its Author's principle of the infinite worth of the individual soul. His association with publicans and sinners was taken exception to, as though it showed an indifference on His part to their faults. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." It was an offence that He allowed the penitent sinner to come near Him. His deportment to the outcasts signified that in His eyes their lives had an unique value, which could be estimated by no material scale of reckoning. "There is joy in heaven" when one of them is brought within the domain of the Righteousness which is the true "life." It has even been said that "the originality of Christ consisted in seizing the emergent notion of the dig-

[1] 1 Peter ii. 17.

nity and value of the individual soul, and elevating it to the forefront."[1] Harnack lays equal emphasis on this characteristic of Christianity when he says that Christ was the first to set the value of every human soul in a clear light, and that what He effected in the assertion of its intrinsic worth can never be undone.[2]

In contrast with this peculiar distinction of the ethics of the Gospel is the manner in which in the earlier times the elect nation as a whole, or the anointed King as its representative, was regarded as the special object of the divine regard. It was held that the Covenant was with the chosen race, and the value and status of the individual were acquired in virtue of his membership in it. It was not till the period of the captivity with its affliction and national humilation that the immediate personal relation of the individual to God, and of his consequent intrinsic value, became apparent. Still greater in this respect is the contrast of Christianity with the ideas embodied in the organisation of society in Greece and Rome, and in paganism generally. In the Greek state those in possession of full personal rights were a minority of the population. The maintenance of a numerous servile class was regarded as the indispensable condition of the freedom of those who were citizens, and of the very existence of the community. The obedience and menial

[1] Stalker, "Ethic of Jesus," p. 28.
[2] "What is Christianity," p. 69.

labour exacted of the majority were held to be incompatible with their personal liberty, though necessary in the interests of the state. The slave according to Aristotle was "a kind of animate possession," an "animate implement," subject to the will of the free man. His value was that of an instrument, or of the price he was worth as a saleable commodity. In ancient Israel slavery had been sanctioned, but was apparently practised to a less degree than elsewhere; when it occurred, its bondage was in various ways mitigated by a spirit of humanity in the laws which regulated it. At the age of the introduction of Christianity the condition in which a large portion of the human race existed, as those to whom personal rights were denied, and whose social status was that of serviceable chattels, was accepted as in accordance with the nature of things, save by those philosophers whose assertion of the brotherhood of mankind may have had some influence on the treatment of the slaves by the more generous and considerate of the masters. The conception of the worth and dignity of each and all, as akin to God and belonging to the race whom Christ came to redeem, became with the diffusion of Christianity a powerful factor in the deliverance and elevation of the victims of man's oppression.[1] Without revolutionary interference with the established order of society, it placed the slave in the essentials of his humanity on a level with his master. It has pro-

[1] See Lightfoot, "Intro. to Philemon."

gressively borne fruit in the abolition of serfdom in Europe, in the emancipation of the negroes in the West Indies at a great cost, and in the prohibition of slavery within the bounds of the British Empire and of the United States. The Ethics of Christianity is committed to disavow as evil any kind of conduct or form of social order, which is inconsistent with the moral dignity of man as man. The truth in Kant's principle of the absolute worth of personality, that "humanity in all persons must be treated always as an end in itself, and never merely as a means," was anticipated by Christianity.

The Ethical End, the Supreme Good, of the individual being the inward ordering and rectifying of his life and character, of the elements of his personality, in accordance with the divine righteousness as expressed in the life of Christ, the Christ-life in man is that "life" in which man realises his true self. In the Fourth Gospel it is called Eternal Life. The expression is of frequent occurrence, whereas the "Kingdom of God" is there only thrice mentioned. "I am come that they might have 'life' and have it abundantly," and again, "I give unto them eternal life." The present tense refers to the present fact. "He that heareth my words *hath* everlasting life." "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." "This is life eternal that they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou didst send." In the First Epistle it is said that in Christ "the life, the eternal

life, which was with the Father was manifested to us" (the Apostles who had seen Christ) (1 John i. 2). In the Authorised Version the word (*aionios*) is rendered indifferently as "everlasting" or "eternal." Hence the expression has been understood to signify "life which lasts for ever." The term, however, designates rather an essential quality of "the life" than the negative idea of its endlessness.[1] The "eternal" signifies not so much that which exists in a time indefinitely protracted, like a straight line endlessly produced, as that which, while present in time and in the measures of time, yet transcends time, and would be though time were not. It means, not merely an existence whose prolongation is without termination, but rather that in which there is always the prospect of further progress towards the fulfilment and realisation of "the life" as an infinite Good and the absolute End. It implies that that progress is not doomed to be rendered abortive by any external or circumstantial cause. No such hindrance has power to make impossible the realisation of the true or Christ-self. "Eternal life" is life free from that certainty of eventual short-coming and default which is inseparable from the life which has an earthly and inferior end as its aim. Such is the case of everyone who seeks to find his "life," and to realise himself, in the attainment of the material ends on which men fix their desires.

[1] For an elaborate discussion of the conception, see Prof. Pringle-Pattison, "Idea of God," Lectures 18, 19.

Even if he succeeds beyond his hopes in getting the wealth which many seek first and make the object of their life, even if it were possible for him thereby temporarily to attain satisfaction in the realisation of his end, there must eventually come a sense of incompleteness and non-fulfilment, when he is brought to face the inevitable close of the life which he had made his "life." "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided." Those also who have devoted themselves to so worthy an end as the acquisition and increase of knowledge, realise that completion in that form of attainment is equally impossible for man, because of the shortness of life, and owing to the limitation of man's faculties. There are problems which he knows to be insoluble by his understanding. Incompleteness is as inherent in man's present intellectual life as mortality in his physical constitution.

There is thus a deep ethical significance in the term "eternal" as applied to "the life," inasmuch as it betokens its exemption from that certain frustration, that "vanity," to which life in its lower forms is subject (Rom. viii.). Its essential nature renders it superior to those conditions of failure and defeat which beset the latter. Outward changes and contingencies can lay no interdict or arrest upon it in the accomplishment of its end and destiny. Thus "eternal life," while not identical in meaning with Immortality, logically implies it. The realisation

of an absolute and Ideal Righteousness demands a continuity of existence adequate for its attainment. The vocation to be holy as God is holy requires for its prosecution an indefinite survival of the individual in a life to come. Kant founds his belief in immortality on the categorical imperative of the Moral Law which declares a life of perfect virtue to be obligatory on man. The law of man's practical reason requires of him a complete conformity to it. "Thou ought-est, and therefore thou canst." But in man this complete inner accord is prevented by the presence in him of the conflicting element of sense, and by his liability to be influenced by impure or at least non-moral motives. There is thus under earthly conditions a persisting antinomy in his nature, which hinders him from attaining a life of perfect and unimpeded virtue. If reason requires unconditionally of him the complete conformity of his will to the moral law, a volition independent of all merely prudential or sensuous motives, and if such conformity cannot be attained in the present life, it follows that a life to come is a rational necessity, unless reason is inconsistent with itself. Immortality is a postulate of the practical reason, inasmuch as a life beyond the present is the necessary condition of man's continued approach to an Ideal of absolute perfection.[1]

[1] The Baird Lecture Series contains an able exposition of "The Idea of Immortality," by Principal Galloway, St. Andrews.

It is therefore necessary to set beside the ethical principle of the infinite value of the individual soul, the complementary truth that man's relation to the Ideal Good in this life is not one of final realisation, but at best of continuous approximation. "Not as though I have already obtained, or am already made perfect." Christ's words, according to what is accepted as the true reading, are "Ye shall be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." So read, they are an injunction to make the Divine Righteousness the End and standard of moral endeavour, to keep always in the direction of it, to strive to come ever nearer to it. It is not expressed as a command such as would imply that that Ideal End or Self is attained by a finite being in the imperfect conditions of this life. The question here is not that with which some perfectionist theories have been occupied, as to whether man can faultlessly implement a law of perfect righteousness in his outward actions. We are here concerned with the inward and vital condition of a nature entirely conformed, in desires and motives and completely formed habits of character, to the divine Righteousness as expressed in the life of Christ. The true self, the Christ-self in man, is never in actual experience realised in its fullness by man in this world. The moral life as attained by him, comes short even of that inner accord and due performance of function of which Plato spoke. The opposition between the higher and the lower, between the

" spirit " and the " flesh," is not entirely overcome in a complete and untroubled harmony. The unique value of the individual soul does not depend on the measure in which it has reached its end, but on its capacity of growth and approach toward it. For not only is the End beyond its reach in this life, it cannot in its totality be visualised or adequately conceived by it. " Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive " the full content and inner order of the life of perfect Righteousness. " It doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is " (1 John iii. 2). " If the idea (of the Good) as it actuates us, carried with it a full consciousness of what its final realisation would be, the distinction between idea and realisation would be at an end." [1] St. Paul said that he counted not himself to have apprehended. He made it his one purpose to press forward, in the hope that he might apprehend that for which also he was apprehended by Christ (Phil. iii. 12). Effort, conflict, the fall and the rising again, approximation on the whole, characterise man's present moral experience at its best. The advance towards the End involves struggle and denial of the lower self. But where there is this progress, there is moral victory and a measure of moral attainment. In the moral life

[1] Green, " Proleg. to Ethics," Bk. III., Chap. V., sec. 288. Also Bk. III., Ch. V., secs. 253, 254.

man's first duty is to aim at the best he knows ; in doing so, his vision of the Good becomes more adequate and comprehensive ; and increasing clearness of moral vision is itself an important element of moral progress. Yet there can be no finality in the individual's ethical experience under present conditions. Each level arrived at proves to be a stage on the way to one still more advanced. " We rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things."

The Chief Good of the individual being the character whose constituent elements are harmonised in accordance with the divine Ideal in Christ's life, the blessedness which Christ associates with it can only be a blessedness after the same type. God cannot be conceived save as supremely blessed. His blessedness is not the reward of His moral perfection, it is an essential element of it. It is not that at which He aims, it is that which He is. In the Ethics of Christianity, happiness or blessedness has a significance wholly different from that assigned to it by theories of Hedonism. In what sense the desire for happiness enters into the Christian motive must be considered by us elsewhere (see p. 244). But it is relevant here once more to observe how greatly the " blessedness " of the Beatitudes differs from that pleasure or happiness, which Utilitarian theories describe as man's end in all he does, the one thing that really counts for him. It is the blessedness of them that mourn, of the poor in spirit, of those who suffer for their loyalty to the Ideal. The

Good sought as the End is that Righteousness of God in the individual life, which is its absolute good and highest well-being. Blessedness is the reflex in feeling of this well-being, the sense of satisfaction inseparable from the progressive "winning of the true self."[1] It is to be conceived as the natural accompaniment of the increasing health and order of the life, whose internal derangement and discord are being progressively rectified in accordance with its divine Ideal. It is represented as an experience of the inner life which may co-exist with outward adversities and distress. The words "as sorrowful yet alway rejoicing" express the inability of external embarrassments to annul this concomitant of well-being in one whose nature is advancing in the line of its true moral destiny. Blessedness is the condition of the life in which the good attained is not accepted as final, and is even surrendered for the sake of attaining a still higher good. It has been defined as the feeling "which accompanies modes of conduct in which an existing harmony of activities is sacrificed to a higher conception of what a true harmony implies—in other words, in which the self as static is sacrificed to the self as progressive."[2] The happiness or blessedness of the Beatitudes is conceived as reserved for those who seek the Ethical End, and as theirs in the measure in which they realise that End.

[1] Luke xxi. 19 (R.V.).

[2] Prof. Muirhead, "Elements of Ethics," p. 110.

Note.

Dr. Hastings Rashdall (see "The Theory of Good and Evil," vol. II., pp. 61-70) criticises the expression "self-realisation," and the "doctrine very fashionable in philosophical circles which finds the key to all ethical problems" in that word. However valid his strictures may be as regards the presentation of this doctrine in some philosophical systems, the same objections do not apply to that which points to Christ's Life and Character as expressing the divine Righteousness in human form, and which asserts the ethical End of the individual to be conformity thereto as the realisation of his true self. His first objection to the expression is that it is self-contradictory. "To realise means to make real. You cannot make real what is real already, and the self must certainly be regarded as real before we are invited to set about realising it." (Vol. II., p. 62). Yet there is a sense in which men must *win* their soul, their true self. The self at the beginning of its moral history is lacking in many of those elements and features which it is to acquire in its progress towards the fullness of life in Jesus Christ which is the End set before it. "We cannot after all conceive the soul as a static, fixed, self-identical substance, planted in unchangeable relations to unchanging moral facts; its nature is

to be a continuous, self-realising or self-organising process. It is, indeed, as it grows." [1]

A possible meaning in which the term may be used, according to Dr. Rashdall, is as signifying the realisation of some potentiality or capacity of the self which is at present unrealised. He makes the somewhat reluctant admission that " in this sense no doubt it is true enough that morality must consist in some kind of self-realisation." The question is, what *kind* of self-realisation ? and to that question Christianity gives a clear and definite answer.

Other possible interpretations of the expression are said to be, the realisation of *all* the capacities of human nature, and "an equal, all-round development of one's whole nature—physical, intellectual, emotional " (p. 62). But such propositions, he says, when interpreted strictly and literally, require an impossibility. No one can cultivate *all* the latent faculties of his nature to the highest point of their possible development. There is neither time nor opportunity in any lifetime for such an all-round evolution. Even within the intellectual sphere there must be specialisation, one kind of faculty being cultivated while others are not similarly improved. Darwin is referred to as one who acknowledged that he had increased his powers of observation and ratiocination to the detriment or even

[1] Macintosh, " The Originality of the Christian Message," p. 156.

extinction of certain other mental aptitudes once possessed by him. What is here argued is true, but it is not revelant to the subject of the ethical aim of Christianity. In the quest of that End the varied powers of man's nature, physical, intellectual, emotional, are brought into harmony with it, and made subsidiary to it. This gives them their value for the Kingdom of God. This moral End prohibits the exercise and development of faculties and capacities which are at variance with it, and inconsistent with the " true life," the Christ-life. The End thus given in Christianity is far removed from the conception of the ultimate Good as it is construed in Simmel's Theory. The kind of self-realisation there proposed is that of a life lived without any definite goal and for its own sake, swinging between extremes of success and disappointment, of accomplishment and defeat,—life of whatever kind, provided it be lived in its intensest degree and at the high pressure of a maximum of energy.

Another possible meaning of the term, Dr. Rashdall says, is " the realisation of a man's highest capacities by the sacrifice of the lower." This may be accepted as in part the significance it has in the Ethics of Christianity. But he adds, " Even with the gloss that ' self-realisation ' means realisation of the ' true ' or ' higher ' self, it tells us nothing at all about the question what this true self-realisation is." It may be so, we would again remark, in some forms of a purely Rational Idealism ; but the sense

in which the expression has been used above is not liable to this criticism. Whatever may be said of other ethical systems, Christian Ethics sets before men as their End the Life and Character of One, in whom and by whom it claims that the Divine Righteousness was fulfilled. In Him is "the Life," and "to grow up in all things into Him" is that process of realisation of the "true Self" of man, which is the ethical end of his individual life.

III.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The Ethical End in its Social or Inclusive Aspect.

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The ethical end, or supreme Good in its individual aspect was described as the inner ordering and rectifying of the character in accordance with the divine righteousness as manifested in the mind and life of Jesus Christ. The Christian Ideal of personal character is the Christ-life as increasingly realised in the individual.

Those in whom this assimilation to the type of manhood in Christ takes place, are by that fact brought into a spiritual relationship with each other. They form a community whose vital interests and view of the ultimate meaning and end of life are the same for all. Character and personality are not developed in solitude and isolation; they require the life of fellowship in order to educe their latent potentialities. That type of personality which Christianity presents as the Ethical End of the individual life, requires a social environment, through its relationship

with which alone it can progress towards the full realisation of itself. It finds itself in the life it shares with others. Its social sphere is a realm whose principle of cohesion is not external and political, but inward, ethical and spiritual, in which the rule and righteousness of God are the supreme concern of all alike, and in which their spiritual affinity, and sympathy with each other, form a bond of more vital import than that which is the basis of any of the ordinary and secular associations of men. The Kingdom of God whose advent Christ announced is composed of those citizens, in this or in any world, in whose characters and lives God's righteousness is the formative and regulative power. It is the common and inclusive Good of all persons imbued with its spirit. It is the new and perfect social order, whose members live in an ideal relationship to God of trust and sonship, and in an ideal relationship to each other of brotherhood and love. Entrance into this divine society is for each individual the promise and earnest of the highest good. It is, to them, the first and greatest object of desire, the aim which includes all elements of the truly Good. Christ speaks as if men's association with it was the most eventful circumstance of their lives.[1] In it and because of their participation in its life, they are in the way toward the realisation of their true life and destiny.

[1] E.g. Matt. xiii. 44-46.

It is unnecessary to inquire whether the expression, Kingdom of God, applies chiefly to the rule of God, or to the realm within which that rule is exercised. It has no geographical boundaries or exclusive territory, like the political monarchies of this world. Yet a ruling power implies a sphere within which it is sovereign ; and the Kingdom of God embraces all individuals who belong to the Community, wherever found, in which the will of God is the effective authority, and whose members are associated in a union of obedience to God and love to one another. When this Kingdom of God, which occupied a central place in Christ's teaching, is called an Ideal, it is not meant that it exists only in idea, as a Utopia of which devout souls might dream, or as a celestial fellowship whose home is confined to another world, citizenship in which is reserved for those who have passed out of the mortal coil of this earthly existence. It is the new social Order already inaugurated by Christ, wherein reign righteousness and love, which is destined to cover all the earth, and which will increasingly supplant the old Order in which Mammon, covetousness and hatred have had too great a prevalence. It is an ideal which, under God's benevolent providence, in His time and way, is being attained, and will eventually be realised on earth "even as it is in heaven."

The Kingdom of God or of Heaven, was an expression frequently upon Christ's lips from the beginning of His ministry. He made it the text of

His message when He came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark i. 15). In the Sermon on the Mount He proclaims it to be the first and highest end of man's desires and aims, that in which his supreme Good is included, and realised. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." In these words He used an expression which was familiar to his contemporaries through their acquaintance with the Old Testament Scriptures and other Jewish religious writings. The anticipation of a Realm and Reign of God had its origin in the remote past of the history of Israel. The belief that Israel was chosen by Jehovah to be His peculiar people, dated from Patriarchal times. It was connected with the conviction that He meant to do great things for His people. A magnificent future must be in store for the nation which was the special object of His protection and favour. The race of Abraham would multiply greatly and enter upon the inheritance of an ample territory under His rule and guidance. The people of Jehovah, according to these hopes, were destined to advance towards a condition of unrivalled prosperity, in the enjoyment of material abundance, and in a state of happy security won by victory over all their enemies. The future awaiting them would in its splendour and permanence be one befitting their divine election. These traditional expectations of magnificence and power had received encouragement from the success-

ful wars of David's reign, and from the peaceful achievements of Solomon's time. The subsequent fortunes of the people during the troubled period of the dual monarchy seemed to postpone the realisation of the national ambition. But so far from being extinguished, that hope derived sustenance and vigour even from circumstances which seemed adverse to its realisation. God could not abandon His people or prove unfaithful to His deliberate promise and purpose. It is the frequent theme of the prophets that their disasters and humiliations were divine chastisements, and that through repentance and renewed loyalty to their God, after punitive judgments had their purifying effect, the ancestral hope, believed to be founded on the divine promise, would be fulfilled in a realm whose righteousness and ideal order would be under the rule and supervision of God Himself. This renovated state of things would supervene in consequence of the irresistible providence of God in the affairs of men, as a result of divine interventions and world-wide changes. With its accomplishment is sometimes associated the advent of a Person of extraordinary dignity and influence, standing in an unique relation to Jehovah, and allied with Him as His vice-gerent in effecting the great revolution. This Messianic personage is sometimes represented as participating in divine attributes. He shall be called " Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." " Of the increase of his

government and of peace under him there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his Kingdom, to establish it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever." It was not until a later period that a Messianic reference was recognised in forecasts of a different strain, which speak of the "Servant of the Lord," despised and rejected, bearing the iniquities of the people, the personification of the True Israel which suffers for the unfaithful nation. It is, however, with the Messianic age and realm that we are here concerned, rather than with the person of the Messiah himself. Whether through victory, or vicarious suffering, or apparent and temporary defeat, the end is the establishment of a realm in which righteousness and its accompaniment of complete felicity shall eventually prevail. In some cases the expectation takes the patriotic and mundane form of a realm in which the Hebrew national aspirations would be fully realised. The honour and glory of the future are to belong to Israel, and other nations are to be subject and tributary to the people of the promise. The Kings of the earth shall bring their gifts to the restored Jerusalem as the centre of a world-wide dominion. Yet from time to time the ethical and universal aspects of the Messianic Kingdom come into view. It will receive the homage of all nations and witness the subjugation of its enemies. But Righteousness is the distinctive characteristic of the Kingdom. Its dominion will be exercised in

the interests of righteousness. "The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills, by righteousness." In those days "the righteous shall flourish." The rule of God to be at length received over the earth will abolish the moral evils that bring confusion and misery into human life. "Thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever. The little one shall become a thousand and the small one a strong nation," and "the work of righteousness shall be peace, and effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever."[1] As opposed to national and exclusive views of the benefits of the coming age, Jeremiah is the exponent of the wider hope of the participation of all in the future consummations. This universalism is connected with the increasing perception of the inwardness and spirituality of the Kingdom, and of man's qualifications for it, which marks the utterances of Jeremiah. He represents the tendency to view the individual, and not the nation, as the unit in relation to the divine purpose and regard. It is recognised that the Kingdom of God will belong to those in whose heart God's law is written, the inwardly righteous; and thus men's minds were prepared for the conviction that the Kingdom of God was *within* man, and that the moral and spiritual transformation of individuals, was the condition and preparation for its extension over the world. Of this extension Israel is destined

[1] Isaiah lx. 21; xxxii. 17.

to be the instrument. "God will be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord and His name one" (Zech. xiv. 9); and Israel's mission is to bring others to share in that Supreme Good in which all nations of the earth shall be blessed, and to be the intermediary in a universal reconciliation. "Israel shall be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth" (Is. xix. 24).

After the cessation of prophecy, and in the periods preceding and contemporaneous with Christ, the expectation of the Kingdom was associated in the minds of many with the political hope of national deliverance from the Syrian and later from the Roman domination. It also persisted in a more spiritual form in those circles of the godly by whom a deeper interpretation was given to the prophetic utterances, and who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem." At the same time, the period preceding the Christian era produced an apocalyptic literature in whose figurative and symbolical visions the Messianic consummation was envisaged as the fast-approaching deliverance from all the evils of the present.[1] The end of all things was believed to be at hand. The Apocalyptists were pessimistic regarding the present world, viewing it as too deeply sunk in unrighteousness and corruption to be capable of reformation. No process of purification could transform it into the proper environment for

[1] See Canon R. H. Charles, "Between the Old and New Testaments," Chaps. II. and III.

the reign of the saints. That consummation behoved to be ushered in by the catastrophic destruction of nature and human society as they were, and by the inauguration of new heavens and a new earth which would be the fitting habitation of righteousness.

This apocalyptic prospect of the end of the world in the immediate future offered no incentive to an active virtue and benevolence which would strenuously and hopefully endeavour to make God's righteousness prevail over the abounding evils of the present world. Those who believed that a total abolition of all existing conditions of life and of society was imminent, would naturally consider it to be the whole duty of men to endure present ills with patience, and to cultivate those qualities of innocence and detachment from the world, which would fit them for life in the impending new era of untroubled peace in which every want would be supplied and every hope fulfilled.

In the time of Christ and among the people who heard His words, the idea of the Kingdom was part of the popular religion. Now it has been maintained that Christ's doctrine as to the Kingdom of God, was essentially and throughout apocalyptic in its character. This interpretation of it, if true, must vitally affect our estimate of the ethical meaning and value of His moral teaching, and raises the question as to the present applicability of its principles, and of their validity for all time in the progressive social conditions of an enduring world of human relation-

ships. The apocalyptic anticipation of a speedy end of the world was proved by the course of events to be erroneous. That Christ inculcated moral truths and principles is certain. But if it were shown that Jesus Himself believed in no future for this world and the human race, if in His view there were to be no time or place to speak of for the exercise of most of those virtues understood to constitute the Christian character, the conclusion could scarcely be avoided that His morality must fail to meet the requirements of man's individual and social life in its increasing complexity, and that it must forfeit its claim to establish a moral standard for all times, and in the new situations that should emerge in the long course of human history. In other words, it would, as some writers have termed it, be an "interim ethic," setting a high value on such dispositions and conduct as would be morally fitting in the last days of an expiring world, and would afford no adequate ethical guidance for subsequent generations of the human race. Support has been sought for this view of the scope of Christ's teaching in such sayings as the discourse on His Coming in St. Mark xiii. and St. Matt. xxiv., in the parables of the Advent, in references to His Return in the clouds, and to the gathering together of the elect, and in allusions to the end as at hand.[1]

[1] Cf. Schweitzer, "The Quest of the Historical Jesus." Weiss, "The Teaching of Jesus on The Kingdom of God." Schwartzkopff, "The Prophecies of Jesus Christ."

If we attend to the whole scope and tendency of that teaching, it seems evident that this account of Christ's view of the Kingdom and of His attitude towards the future unduly exaggerates one aspect of it, and does not take account of many statements calling for a different interpretation.[1] There are elements in it, as it has come down to us, which are eschatological in their import. Christ was a prophet, the greatest of the prophets. And as in the prophetic visions the future time is often represented as fore-shortened, so that the Day of the Lord seemed near at hand, so it is sometimes contemplated by Him. That Day which the prophets had foretold was in His predictions either a decisive moment in the coming of the Kingdom, or its consummation. There is no evidence to prove that Jesus possessed a detailed foresight of the course and events of human history in the ages to come. He disclaimed a knowledge of the day and the hour of its culmination in the Kingdom of God, with whom a 1000 years are as one day, and one day as a 1000 years. The thoughts of Jesus may have frequently dwelt on those apocalyptic views of the future, which were familiar to Him and to those who heard Him; and His language would at times be affected by them. But the supposition that the world was sunk beyond

[1] Principal D. S. Cairns, "Christianity in the Modern World," p. 173 ff. Canon Streeter, "The Historic Christ," in "Foundations." Dean Rashdall, "Conscience and Christ," p. 42 ff.

redemption, and that God seemed to have withdrawn from active intervention in its affairs, was far from being the mind of Christ as to its condition and prospects. The utterances of Christ which have been claimed to be apocalyptic must be taken along with much else in His teaching which goes to prove that His conception of the Kingdom and its conditions was essentially ethical in character, and that it embraced all those whose motives and habits of life were in accordance with its ideal of Righteousness. Those who transmitted His words were themselves acquainted with, possibly possessed by, current ideas, and might be apt to give more of an apocalyptic colouring to some of His utterances than they actually bore. The very earnestness and urgency of His appeal may have sometimes assumed a form borrowed from the apocalyptic language familiar to His hearers, as that which was best fitted to bring home to them the extreme gravity of the decision required of them. If Jesus clothed His thoughts in parabolic form to arrest those who were dull of hearing, He may also have used apocalyptic language, that through that mode of expression also His essential Message might reach some minds which might otherwise have been unimpressed. But to suppose that Christ's deepest thoughts with regard to the world and the future were those of an apocalyptist visionary is to overlook many utterances of His which are inconsistent with such an assertion. "He lifts his mind to the great future, when the

will of God can be fully realised." [1] He believed in a time when that Will would be done on earth. He bids His followers look and pray for that day. It is noticeable that for Apocalyptists, as for the disciples who reported Christ's words, the precise time when these things would happen was a subject of anxious speculation. Christ discourages on the part of His hearers such enquiries as to the day and the hour, which are known to God alone. The teaching of our Lord, especially on themes which aroused strong emotion, was often expressed in a figurative and oriental style. He conveyed His message in the terms and manner best calculated to find access to the uninstructed minds around Him, and to awaken them to its immediate urgency and importance. When He said " The Kingdom of God is at hand," or, in connection with His power over the demoniacs, " The Kingdom of God is come upon you," [2] the words may well bear a very different meaning from that which sees in them a speedy, catastrophical end of the world. A declaration of an end they might indeed be, for the coming of Christ marked the close of the former world-age and inaugurated the new. A premonition of revolutionary changes to come they might well be, for the history of the Kingdom on earth has not flowed in a uniformly smooth current. It has been accompanied with sudden and violent upheavals, by changes in which

[1] E. F. Scott, " Eth. Teach. of Jesus," p. 46.

[2] Luke xi. 20.

old things rapidly passed away, and new things in the political, social and religious condition of mankind were ushered in. When Christ spoke of the Powers of the Heavens being shaken, or of the darkening of the sun and the moon, He employed figures of speech familiar from Old Testament usage, and having a recognised significance as betokening national commotions and a change in the times. The impression made by His words is that of the uncertainty of the time of the end, rather than of its immediateness. Their purport is to be always ready to welcome the Kingdom, whether in its partial realisations or in its final dénouement in God's time. In putting His disciples on their guard against the many pretenders to His name that were to arise, He seems to indicate that time must elapse before the end. A similar prolongation of the time is implied in the preaching of the Gospel " unto all the nations." When He represents the final prevalence of the Kingdom as due to the interposition of divine Power, that is in accordance with the anticipation that the realisation of the Christian end, whether in its individual or social aspect, is not to be effected by man's merit or unaided efforts, but by the aid of the power of God, whose is the Kingdom and in whose own appointed time it will come.

While allusions to the Kingdom of God, occur frequently in the Synoptic teaching, there are two groups of sayings in which it is brought into special

prominence, the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables of the Kingdom in Matthew xiii. Christ there expounds and amplifies the announcement made by Him at the beginning of His ministry. In the Sermon, as we have seen, the Kingdom is set forth as the reign of God over all who inwardly are subject to it and live according to its requirements. Its citizens are those whose character and conduct manifest their spiritual affinity with it. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven." It consists of all who bear in their natures the impress of its character. They are the "poor in spirit," and those who have been so faithful to its principles as to suffer persecution for the sake of that righteousness which is its essential characteristic. Theirs *is* the Kingdom of Heaven. They are of it and it is in them. It is in them as inward righteousness, or rightness, of mind and spirit; it is without them as comprehending all others who have the same mind, and are animated by the same motives.

The second group of sayings on this subject (in Matt. xiii., cf. Mark iv. and Luke viii.) illustrates in various ways the nature of the Kingdom, its progressive history, and its influence in human society. It does not advance by methods of compulsion, such as have at times been resorted to in the history of Christianity through a mistaken understanding of the injunction to "compel them to come in." Its

adherents are won in virtue of a receptivity in themselves for its living truth which comes to them like good seed to a suitable soil, and fructifies abundantly in their lives and conduct according to the capacity of each. In the parable of the Tares, its members are represented as living side by side, for the present inextricably associated in temporal relationships with, those who are alien to it, and whose distinction in character from it time increasingly reveals. It is only at last, "in the time of the harvest," when the consummation of the Kingdom's time of growth has arrived, that the final separation will take place. Its progress from small beginnings to ultimate supremacy is likened to the growth of the mustard seed, and to the leaven which acts inwardly and in unseen ways upon the mass "till the whole is leavened." By some it is found as the result of diligent search, as in the case of the merchant seeking pearls: by those who thus effectually find it, it is seen to be the highest good for whose possession all other things, as intrinsically of inferior and relative worth, are voluntarily sacrificed. By some it is found who do not consciously seek it (Matt. xiii. 44), but, recognising its supreme value, make it their end at all costs to obtain it.

The frequency with which Christ alluded to the Kingdom justifies the importance attributed to it by those who see in it the all-inclusive social End in His teaching. These allusions are often of a more incidental kind than those which occur in such

passages as we have referred to, where the Kingdom is the explicit theme. In Christ's utterances to individuals, the ethical and spiritual view of the Kingdom comes into special prominence. In the tradition of the visit of Nicodemus, repentance and conversion are stated to be indispensable in those having an interest in it. Apart from such a radical spiritual change and renewal, the individual has not the insight to become fully aware of the existence of the Kingdom, much less the inward qualifications of actual membership in it. The commendation given to the Scribe's "discreet answer," "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God," referred to an inward state of mind and heart in the man, which wanted but a little of being that in which the spirit of the Kingdom consists (Mark xii. 33). In that answer a universal and active love is said to sum up the whole duty of man. The ethical nature of the conception is expressly affirmed, when it is said of children with their open and trustful disposition, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." And so in its inwardness "it cometh not with observation," but by the adhesion to it of those whose motives and habits of character and life are in accordance with its ideal of righteousness. "The Kingdom of God is *within you*" (Luke xvii. 21). The meaning may be "in your souls." But even if (as in the R.V. margin) the rendering is "in the midst of you," i.e. in the person of Christ and His disciples, the saying referred to the actual, spiritual presence of

the Kingdom as a fact, however little those out of sympathy with it were aware of it. While therefore account is taken of reported sayings of Christ which seem to explain the expectation in the early Church of the speedy end of the present world, it may be maintained that "in the main the moral teaching is not influenced in any way by the eschatology."[1] No limited apocalyptic outlook in that teaching interferes with the acceptance of the ethical principles of Christ as forming the basis of a morality both for His own age and for a world with a long eventful history before it,—for the races and generations of mankind whose prolonged course is in God's time and way to issue in the full triumph of the Kingdom of Righteousness.

The further teaching of the New Testament on this subject is a continuation of that of Christ. St. Paul, acquainted no doubt with many of the sayings attributed to the Master, was convinced of the speedy consummation of the Kingdom, though the expectation of the still cherished hope of the Parousia is less prominent in his later writings. Yet those ethical precepts which in their detailed applications he abundantly inculcates, are suited to the circumstances of those whose lot is to live and labour in the present condition of things, whether its end is at hand or remote. Whensoever and howsoever that "coming" and consummation may take

[1] Seth, "Essays in Ethics and Religion," p. 70.

place, it will eventuate in an absolute supremacy of God in which the Kingly attributes which have secured the victory over all evil will blend with those of the Father. The Kingdom will be delivered up " to God even the Father," that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 24-28). It is thus suggested that the form of the ideal social order of the Kingdom as fully realised will be that of a universal brotherhood under the Paternal rule of God. But even in present circumstances the inward and ethical nature of the Kingdom in actual experience is announced in Paul's description of it as consisting in " Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The Kingdom of God which is thus the comprehensive and inclusive End in the ethical programme of Christianity, though often very vaguely apprehended, has been a persistent ideal of unique influence and power during the Christian centuries. It has been variously understood, sometimes misunderstood ; but the truth in it which has given it permanence is that which Christ Himself announced concerning it, while the conception of it has been enriched and expanded, as its true significance and importance in Christ's teaching have increasingly appeared.

(1) It is the rule and realm of God, *de jure*, over all men ; *de facto*, in the lives of those who are subject to that rule, those whose characters are being renewed in accordance with it, and whose conduct is consistent with its requirements. It is the realm

whose subjects' lives are transformed by trust and obedience towards God and by love and beneficence towards men.

(2) It is the rule or realm which Christ has rendered actual and progressive in the world. It existed in those around Him who were imbued with His Spirit and in sympathy with His purpose. It is true that in previous days and in other lands God had not left Himself without witness, and that witness had been received by responsive spirits in every age. Yet it was Christ's mission to establish the Kingdom with an altogether new authority, effectiveness and promise, so that the least in it of His followers was greater than John His forerunner, or than the prophets and sages of former times. As thus inaugurated by Christ, it is a rule or realm now in part in being ; it is a present and living fact, and no longer only an object of hope and aspiration. It then took its place as a factor in the life of mankind ; but it had before it a future altogether incommensurable with those beginnings. In His day it existed in the transformed lives of the humble few. But those who stood by and heard Christ's words would in their own lifetime see the Kingdom coming with increasing power. And it was their part as it has been that of those coming after them to watch and pray and strive on its behalf, that it might progress from strength to strength and at last come in its fullness and victorious ubiquity. We can trace the manner in which during

Christ's personal ministry, He allowed this universalism of His outlook to appear with increasing clearness to those who heard Him. Abruptly stated at first, it would have been incomprehensible at that time and to that people. He therefore ostensibly limited the activities of His emissaries in its interests to Israel, forbidding them to go into the way of the Gentiles or even into the cities of the Samaritans. Yet again and again His utterances prove that this was but a temporary restriction, and that His own view already embraced an extension of the Kingdom which should be world-wide. This universalism was suggested in the statement that "the field is the world." He did not repel the centurion who was a foreigner, but commended his faith as superior to any He had found in Israel, predicting that the privileges of the Kingdom would be accorded to those coming from East and West. In His parable He made choice of a Samaritan to act the part of a benefactor, and illustrate the true meaning of neighbourhood. It has been said that "the Parable of the Good Samaritan marks an epoch in the history of morals."[1] At a very early period some of His followers realised that their commission extended not only to Jerusalem and Judea, but to Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts i. 8). The increasing comprehension by Christians of the universality of their religion as

[1] D'Arcy, "Christian Ethics and Modern Thought," p. 54.

providing a faith and a morality for all times and peoples was the inevitable result of Christ's own words and acts.

(3) It is thus that an explanation is given of the apparent contradiction between statements which speak of the Kingdom as actually present and those which refer to it as still in the future. "The Kingdom of God is come upon you" (Matt. xii. 28), "is in the midst of you" (Luke xvii. 21 marg.); but again it is said to some that they *shall see* the Kingdom come with power; and again, "When the Son of Man cometh in His Kingdom." There is no opposition between these expressions, when it is understood that the Kingdom which has come is that which exists in those who are already imbued with its spirit, while that which is to come is the same Kingdom in its ideal power and universal righteousness. The central petition in the Prayer is "Thy Kingdom come," in which its consummation is desired as a future event. But the Prayer ends with the ascription, "Thine *is* the Kingdom," in which God's rule, though still but partially obeyed, is declared to be an actual and present fact. Its complete manifestation remains an ideal of the future, when the old evil things shall have passed away, and the new age and order shall have fully come in God's righteous purpose; and it therefore has still to be sought by its members as the full realisation of the supreme end, and as the inclusive Good.

(4) While men must pray for, and actively further (2 Pet. iii. 12) its coming by their conduct and influence, its accomplishment will not be due to their unaided efforts. Its attainment is not a problem to be solved by their wisdom or a task committed to their unassisted strength. The Kingdom to which they even now belong was introduced as a divine gift mediated through Christ. Through Him it obtained practical reality, and was brought down to earth from the region of vision and aspiration in which it had long hovered before men's hopes. Entrance into it is not the reward of personal merit, but the gracious privilege of those who shall be chosen for it. Citizenship in it is conferred by God's appointment, as the Roman franchise was bestowed upon a community or individual selected for that coveted status. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give unto you the Kingdom." And as with its inauguration, so will it be with its culmination. The will and efforts of men may co-operate with the Supreme Moral Power of the Universe; men may be fellow-workers with God in effecting this issue; yet it remains His gift, who, in ethical achievements as in the products of Nature, "giveth the increase." As the social and inclusive ethical end, the Kingdom, is that state of society towards which the world is moving under the rule and control of God over all issues and events, and in which eventually that rule will be completely manifest. "The Kingdom of God was a name for something conceived by Christ

as being alike the climax of the working of Divine Providence and the goal of human effort." [1] In the attainment of the end whether personal or inclusive, there is a part assigned to men in the working out of their own salvation, while yet it is God that worketh in them both to will and to work on behalf of His good pleasure.

(5) It may be further observed that no complete and final conception is possible to us of what the state of things designated by the Kingdom of God will be in its full realisation.[2] We can only think in terms of the relative and comparative, and are unable to visualise the absolute. The ideal which can be clearly defined and seen in all its aspects ceases to be an ideal. Professor Green emphasises this inability adequately to analyse in thought the ideal contents of the ethical end. He says " It must be admitted that our view of what the life would be, in which ultimate good was actually attained, can never be an adequate view. It consists of the idea that such a life must be possible, filled up as regards particulars, in some inadequate measure, by reflection on the habits and activities, on the modes of life and character which through the influence of that idea have been brought into being." [3] Similarly, all that the Kingdom implies can never be known until it is

[1] Canon B. H. Streeter, " Reality," p. 187.

[2] *Cf.* p. 76 *supra*, for our similar inability in regard to the End in its individual aspect.

[3] " Prolegomena to Ethics," p. 341.

revealed by the actual event. Men's thoughts of it have been enlarged and enriched in the course of time by the recognition of elements not previously seen to belong to it. But "if our idea of it at any time could carry with it a full consciousness of what its final realisation would be, the distinction between anticipation and realisation would be at an end." Dr. Moore argues (in "Principia Ethica") that the term "Good" in its supreme moral sense is indefinable. Definition of a logical kind cannot be given to an ultimate conception which cannot be brought under a higher category.

Other social ideals which are influential in the world at the present day, are also but partially apprehended by those who devote their energies to their service. The enthusiastic socialist has usually but a vague and imperfect idea of what life would be in the completely socialised state. He would find it difficult to describe it in all its particulars under conditions so radically different from those which have obtained in the past. Few communists could coherently delineate the features of the Communist Society when the transition between it and the preliminary stage of revolution is supposed to have been effected, and the State, according to Engels' expression, shall "wither away,"[1]—that time which Lenin forecasts, when the present productive powers of labour shall have been transformed and when, to quote his own words, the path of progress

[1] See Prof. Laski, "Communism," p. 145

will no longer be impeded by " the present unthinking man in the street, capable of spoiling without reflection the stores of social wealth, and of demanding the impossible." [1] All ideals are more or less indistinct, until realised. The vision of the end in the closing chapters of Revelation is addressed to the emotions rather than to the intellect. Negatively, it sets forth a condition of life in which there shall be " nothing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." Positively, it forecasts a social state delivered from all causes of evil and suffering, and pervaded in all its members by righteousness, in which life will attain to its full measure of well-being and happiness. A social order is adumbrated which will fulfil the aspirations of those who seek, whether by reformation or revolution, a new and better world.

The Christian ethical End is the noblest of the social ideals which in various forms have enlisted the devotion and enthusiasm of those who have believed in a regenerated society. In the effete pagan world men's thoughts wistfully reverted to an imagined golden age in the past. Under the influence of the religious belief in a divine purpose in the world, expectation has turned to a bright and happy future in contrast with the hardships and injustice of the present. Apocalyptic hopes have had a fascination for many, and at times have been

[1] Prof. Laski, " Communism," p. 163.

widely cherished. Millenarianism, or Chiliasm, in its forms of both pre- and post-Millennialism, is an article of belief in several bodies of earnest Christians. It, too, has promised a future in which injustice and oppression will be redressed under the reign of Righteousness. St. Augustine saw in the Christian Church "the City of God," which according to his interpretation of the signs of his age, was then replacing the doomed and collapsing world-power of Rome. Hence there was the tendency in mediæval times to regard the visible Catholic Church, embracing the nations in its fold, as itself the Kingdom of God, advancing through all the changes of time to its divine and heavenly consummation. The identification of the Church with the spiritual City of the Revelation was possible only while it preserved the outward semblance of unity, catholicity and sanctity of an earlier time. The too patent shortcomings of the Catholic Church, and the increasing symptoms it exhibited of internal disintegration, put an end to such a claim for it as an external and visible institution. The attributes of the Kingdom seemed rather to belong to the "invisible Church," consisting of "the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof." [1] A mere external membership of the Church by profession does not constitute citizenship in the Kingdom that is spiritual and

[1] "Conf. of Faith," Chap. 25.

ethical,—a citizenship which depends upon the possession of an inner life. The actual Church in its various branches is the imperfect instrument by which men are brought into, and confirmed in, the life of the Kingdom. It may be likened to the drag-net which incloses a multitude in which there are the good and the bad. As there was no Temple in the New Jerusalem, so the present forms in which the Church exists are provisional organisations, seeking with more or less zeal and success to meet the ethical and spiritual wants of society, and to perform their mission of service on behalf of the Kingdom. It has been truly said that the latter is "as much grander than the Church as an ideal is grander than the actual; as much wider as social life is wider than any one institution; as much more Catholic as Christianity is more catholic than ecclesiasticism."[1] The furtherance of the Kingdom as the supreme ethical End is the purpose of the Church, whose vocation it is to bear a continuous witness to the Kingdom's righteousness and purity and love, and to "those things which accompany salvation."

The State also, and civil and municipal authorities, have their part in work which directly or indirectly is conducive to moral and spiritual progress. It has been alleged that the Ethics of Christianity has not given an adequate place to civic virtues and duties, that it has not sufficiently asserted the obligation

[1] Shailer Matthews, "Soc. Teaching of Jesus," p. 77.

to take a practical interest in civil and political affairs. If there has been backwardness in its recognition of responsibility in these respects, the fault is to be traced to a deficiency, not in the principles of that Ethics, but in their application. Christ Himself lived as a law-abiding subject of the State. He took the State for granted as a natural and beneficial institution He vindicated its right to levy taxes for the purposes of government. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." St. Paul expands the injunction. "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due: custom to whom custom: fear to whom fear: honour to whom honour." Co-operation with the State in its task of maintaining order, of repressing crime, of being the divinely ordained "minister for good" to its subjects in the ways pertaining to its province, is clearly a Christian duty. Support of efforts, both local and national, to reform abuses, to effect improvements, to make life better, is in accordance with the Spirit of the Kingdom of God. That in these ways much can be effected in the highest interests of society, is itself a summons to fulfil the duties of a Christian citizenship, and to participate, according to one's ability and opportunity, in the affairs of public life. It is a most unchristian indifference which is shown in the notorious failure of many to put themselves to the trouble even of recording their votes, when matters of much moment to the community fall to be decided by them.

Many of the social activities of our time aim at the accomplishment of objects which are so to speak parts and instalments of the Christian Ideal. Many forms of philanthropic enterprise, endeavours to remove the evils which impoverish and degrade the life of multitudes of our fellow-creatures, are in keeping with Christ's own example when He illustrated the beneficence of the Kingdom by "going about doing good." Such projects of social amelioration are in accordance with the spirit of His Royal Law. In the administration of charity, the Church in this country has acknowledged its duty to the poor and the aged. It accepted an official responsibility for their care down to the time of the inauguration of elective Parochial Boards. It has ever regarded it as an essential part of Christian righteousness to "remember the poor." It is a genuinely Christian sentiment which provides by voluntary effort for the maintenance of Hospitals and numerous other benevolent institutions which are independent of the Church's control. But while relief of individual cases of suffering, whether by personal assistance or through organised effort, is a natural and inevitable expression of the Christian Law of Love, the totally changed circumstances of our time have rendered necessary an enlarged interpretation of the principles taught and exemplified by Christ in the matter of charity. The beneficence of the past and not a little of the Philanthropy of the present, have been, in intention and effect,

palliative rather than preventive. Their design has been rather to provide help for cases of distress as they happen, than to remove the causes of their occurrence. They are in some cases criticised on the ground that, instead of destroying the roots of the evils they have dealt with, their tendency has been rather to multiply and perpetuate them. Indiscriminate alms-giving has often been charged with encouraging mendicancy. The habit of relying upon charitable assistance undermines diligence, self-reliance and self-respect. The growth of knowledge, increased insight into the actual occasions of the evils by which human life is burdened, make it evident both that prevention is better than cure, and that prevention may be effected to a degree unimagined in former times. The hope which illumines the future for many is the prospect of a great and general advance through the removal of many of the sources of the physical, economic, and moral maladies of human society. It is better to anticipate and avert disease by the precautionary methods of science, than to combat it after it has seized upon its victims. It is better to eradicate the causes of destitution and unemployment than to provide the dole or other forms of relief, which can but superficially meet an emergency which in similar circumstances is bound to recur. This hope of progressive deliverance from many present evils and of the consequent human uplift and happiness through the increase of knowledge and instruction

as to the laws of health and social well-being, points to elements in the vision of that Kingdom of God whose coming will bring to all the complete realisation of life in its fullness. The optimistic forecasts of some of the leaders of science encourage the hope of a progressive emancipation from the present "ills that flesh is heir to." A distinguished biologist speaks of the immense power which physical research has placed in the hands of mankind.[1] He believes that that power rightly used would enable men to control their condition in this world and transform human life. In view of what man has done and can do, he calls for more workers in the cause and more strenuous endeavours, so that man may accomplish his destiny and escape from misery. "Why," he asks, "should we be content to wait long years, even centuries, for this control, when we can have it in a few years."[2] In such terms does Science preach its Gospel of the Kingdom.

The measure of success hitherto attained along many lines of advance, and founded upon accurate knowledge of the laws of nature and man's constitution, forms a striking commentary upon the words of Christ with which He concludes His parables of the Kingdom. They predict that "scribes who have been made disciples to the Kingdom of heaven," those who are its enlightened and instructed mem-

[1] "The Kingdom of Man," by Sir E. Ray Lankester, p. 28, etc. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

bers, and active in its cause, will reach larger and higher views of its nature and of the laws of its progress, and in its service will "bring forth out of their treasures things *new* and old" (Matt. xiii. 52). Much of the remedial legislation of the last half-century has been due to the awakening of the national conscience to moral issues which were not previously apprehended in their true significance. We have but to recall generally what has been effected for the benefit of the aged poor, and in the interests of child-life and the adolescent, the avenues to a larger life of public service thrown open by increased facilities of education, the improvement in the status of women, amendments effected in the conditions of labour, the methods of temperance reform which have resulted in increasing sobriety, the schemes to promote better material and moral surroundings for those who cannot help themselves, the international efforts to abolish the curse of war. These "new things" are modern applications of Christian ethics, developments of the morality of Christ in its social aspects. It has had a great influence in the formation of that growing "community conscience" which contains far more promise for the future than that "class consciousness" which some seek to foster. So strong is this altruistic impulse in an ever greater number of people, and so insistent are its demands, that it seems to some as if it might eventually become the ruling motive in social life, as well as in the management and

disposal of men's private possessions. The time may come, it is believed, when by the power of suggestion, of example, of the increasing socialising of public opinion and conscience, the sense of the well-being withheld from multitudes in the Community, and of the wrong and preventable misery suffered by them, will become an intolerable burden upon the minds of those having the means of effecting, or assisting in, the redressing of such disabilities in the lot of others. There are optimists who anticipate that the deliverance of the suffering multitudes will become an object of deeper and more general concern than the enjoyment of selfish luxury or the display of superfluous wealth.

In addition to the efforts of a Christian Philanthropy and the aims of remedial legislation, there is an extensive demand for a new organisation of society with a view to the establishment of a Social Order through which alone, it is maintained, the evils which have arisen under the present industrial system, can be effectually ended. With the Communism which repudiates religion as " the opium of the people " (Marx), Christian ethics can find no point of contact. Its denial of God and purely materialistic outlook, are the negation of Christianity and of Christian morality. But with Socialism, as understood by many of its most enlightened advocates, the case is otherwise. The Socialism which, while advocating its principles as an economic theory, sets a high value upon the moral results expected

from their prevalence, has among its adherents many members of the Christian Church. We are not here concerned with the methods by which Socialists propose to replace the present order by that which they desiderate. Whatever views may be entertained as to the possibility or desirability of effecting the proposed transition from the present system to one radically different from it, the Socialist ideal as presented by some prominent exponents resembles in several points the Kingdom of God, in its Christian significance. The very language used by its supporters is suggestive of the Christian ethical End. The charge Socialism brings against modern Industrialism is that it leads not only to the poverty, but to the moral degradation, of vast numbers of the population, that the worker has only his labour to sell in order to obtain the means of subsistence, and that under the present conditions he who sells his labour sells his soul. It aims at such a partition of the products of industry as would deliver all who serve the community in useful occupations from the dread of unemployment, from harassing anxieties as to daily bread, and from the want of those things requisite to a true and worthy human life. It seeks to emancipate those whom it regards as the victims of social injustice from conditions which deprive them of the possibility of realising the higher values of life. Thus, according to a leading authority, "Socialism on its moral side is a means to the establishment of true individual liberty: on its

economic side, it is a system under which an end will be put to exploitation."[1] And again, "The Socialist objective is a state wherein labour will meet with an adequate reward, and human life be valued above property."[2] "The higher spiritual life of freedom can be lived only when human energy and initiative are not absorbed in the production of physical things. The object of all life is more life."[3] Every one can appreciate the ethical note in such a statement as the following: "So long as Plato's reading of the human heart remains true, men will take up their abode in the city 'which exists in idea,' and rich and poor alike will labour for the establishment of the state where life alone will be valued as treasure, and the tyranny of the economic machine will no longer hold spiritual things in subjection": and he adds, "That state I call socialism."[4]

The conditions of existence which the social revolution is thus expected to usher in, have obviously much in common with those of the Kingdom of God in which all the true values of human life will be realised. Those who believe that "the object of all life is more life," are in sympathy with the intention of Him who came that "men should have life and have it abundantly." Those who hold that

[1] J. Ramsay MacDonald, "The Socialist Movement," p. 130.

[2] J. Ramsay MacDonald, "Socialism," p. 109.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 93. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

" human life is to be valued above property," are at one with Him who said that a man's life consisteth not in the things that he possesses, and that the man who had selfishly amassed a superabundance of property solely for his own enjoyment, was a fool in God's sight. Christ laid it down as a fundamental truth that human life infinitely surpasses in value all that is outward and material. The Christian view of man is as opposed as any Socialist can be, to conditions which exclude large numbers from a worthy life, and to all forms of a dehumanising exploitation of the many in the interests of the few. Man's nature has capacities which cannot find full scope or expression, unless he is in a position to participate as a free agent in the work of the world, regarding it as his vocation to do so, understanding that the necessity to work is an evidence, not of his servitude, but of his significance for the well-being and progress of the community and of mankind. Not a few of those who are thus in sympathy with the ethical aims of Socialism, express their doubt as to its ability to supply a sufficient incentive to exertion and diligence, which for average human nature is provided by the desire of individual profit and advancement. Socialists themselves admit that there is need of much education in the direction of socialising the disposition and motives of the worker, that he may give the best that is in him for the good of the community, and not mainly for the sake of personal gain. Here again their views have been

anticipated in the representation of the Christian End. In the Kingdom of God, all "through love serve one another." Its Founder and Example came "not to be ministered unto but to minister." Society in His day was so constituted that the great ones exercised authority over the masses, using their power for the gratification of pride and self-aggrandisement. But it was not to be so among those whose citizenship was in the Kingdom which Christ inaugurated. "Among you whosoever would become great shall be your minister, and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all" (Mark x. 42, 43). His programme of the Kingdom did not prescribe legislative changes and political readjustments; it insisted upon a personal change, a revolution in character in those accounted worthy of it. If the inward and ethical reform were complete and universal, the social End would already be attained. The regeneration of the individual is from within, and a regenerated society can be formed only of such individuals. The Kingdom of Righteousness consists of those whose characters are in harmony with its moral conditions. Their's is the Kingdom. They are in it, because they are of it.

Thus while the Christian ethical End has both its individual, and its social or collective, aspects, there is no dualism, no opposition between them. The Social End of the Kingdom of God embraces, and is constituted by, the individuals who compose

it. In its comprehensiveness the Kingdom consists of all who possess " the life which is life indeed," all who are the subjects of that Christian reconstruction and reorganisation of the character, of that inward " righteousness," which is the individual End. It includes this world so far as it is regenerated, and the sphere beyond this life which Kant postulates as that in which the ethical progress of man is to go on towards perfection. In view of the Christian belief in a life to come, death does not terminate the membership in the Kingdom which is begun in this world. It is the entrance upon a state in which the life of the Kingdom will be fully realised by those who are unhampered by the imperfections and impediments inseparable from present conditions. The Kingdom is the Eternal realm of the true life, of " whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report," in which the True and the Beautiful blend in perfect unity with the Supreme end of the Good. The prevalence of the Kingdom is " the one far-off, divine event to which the whole creation moves."

IV.

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES AND DUTIES AS APPLICATIONS OF THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS.

IV.

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES AND DUTIES AS APPLICATIONS OF THE GREAT COMMANDMENTS.

We have seen that in the Ethics of Christianity, as in secular systems of morality, an ultimate Good is indicated, as the supreme object—the *summun bonum* of man's life. When in view of that end as the standard and criterion of the Good, we enquire into the ethical programme of Christianity, and consider the particular virtues and duties of the morality which is distinctively Christian, we remember what Christ said in answer to the question as to the Great Commandment, and as to the conduct conducive to the attainment of the Ethical End.[1] A Hedonistic Philosophy asserts that the desire of pleasure furnishes the law of conduct to a being whose supreme good it conceives to be pleasurable feeling. Ethical Rationalism makes reason the guide to moral truth and virtuous conduct in a being the essential element of whose nature is re-

[1] Mark xii. 30, 31 ; Matt. xii. 36-40 ; Luke x. 25-28.

garded as its participation in reason. The Founder of Chrisitianity displays His knowledge of the nature of man and of the springs of human character and action by invoking the insight of Love for the discovery of the Right, and the inspiration of Love as the incentive to achieve it. The Christian character and virtues are those of the citizens of the Kingdom of God, the sphere and environment of man's true life and highest well-being. The persons whose character qualifies them for membership in the Kingdom, and conduces most surely to its unity and extension, are those whose disposition and actions are determined by that principle of universal love which is laid down by Christ as the all-inclusive moral requirement. Of this universal love, as it is defined by Him, Christian dispositions are the phases, and Christian conduct is the practical issue. It is the primary principle, both material and formative, of Christian virtue.[1] It is the *material* principle, inasmuch as all particular virtues of the character are modes in which it expresses itself. They are its applications in the varied circumstances and relations in which the Christian is placed, as an individual and as a member of society. It is the principle from which all positive Christian excellences may be deduced, and on which Christian duties depend. It is the *formative* principle, inasmuch as obedience to the motives it furnishes tends

[1] Definitio brevis et vera virtutis: ordo est amoris. Augustine, De Civ. Dei XV., 22.

to produce in human nature a likeness to the character of Christ, who is the Image of God. "God is love." This formative function of the universal principle is of special note in the Ethics of Christianity because of the emphasis with which Christianity asserts the universal fact of sin. A greater or less derangement and deficiency exist in the moral condition of all, as tried by the Christian standard. The full development and equipoise of all the elements of the righteous character form a condition to which man in the course of his moral experience only gradually approximates. The disturbing factor in the human personality is evinced in undue devotion to those lower and material interests of the self, whose rule in the life is irreconcilable with that realisation of the true self and with those interests of the Kingdom of God, which constitute the ethical End in its individual and its social aspects. It manifests its presence in selfishness, taking such various forms as pride, avarice, sensuality, and in those inordinate desires which have self-gratification for their object.

Love is the principle by which those whose moral nature is thus disorganised and chaotic are delivered from self-centredness and brought into a true attitude towards God and their fellow-creatures. Love alone is capable of lifting man out of the trammels of his narrow and self-contained individuality, and leading him into a right relationship with others. It is the practical principle which teaches man what is due to others, by awakening in him

a discerning sympathy with their claims. It supplies the effective motive which impels him to deny merely self-regarding desires and to render to all their dues. Love to God implies devotion to all that God is, and therefore to all Ideals of Truth and Beauty and Goodness whose objective reality is in God. Love embraces them as its individual End. And the same principle guides to the End in its social bearings. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The *personal* end for the individual is the realisation of his true self in Christ as the Ideal of the true life. His duty to himself is to seek that end. His duty to *others* consists in desiring for them, and in aiding them to attain for themselves, the same personal End and highest Good; in a word, to realise their true selves. His duty to them is fulfilled in loving his neighbour with a love of the same kind and having the same object, as that with which he loves himself. Thus are all Christian virtues and duties traced to a common source in the principle of a universal love. Love is the element in which the Christian character lives and thrives, as in an atmosphere which is the more propitious, the less it is mingled with other elements. But it is a love which embraces God as well as one's fellow-creatures. The Ethics of Secularism frequently becomes eloquent on the theme of the "brotherhood of man," while the First and Great Commandment is ignored by it. Those who recognise no Common Father to be loved, can use the term "brotherhood" only as a

sentimental figure of speech. The mere fact that a Briton whom we have never heard of, or a negro whose existence is unknown to us, has a physical and mental constitution similar to our own, does not make him our brother. If, on the other hand, all are the offspring of God, and objects of His paternal providence, the term brotherhood is the expression of a real relationship. Love to God is no doubt evoked in man at a later period than the instinctive affection to friends around him. But ethically it takes the first place, as due to Him who is supremely worthy of it, and as the actual ground in reason of that love to all men, who are akin to each other through their common kinship with Him.

A difficulty has been alleged as to the possibility of representing love as a duty, and as divinely commanded. It has been said that love, whether to God or man, must be spontaneous, and is repelled rather than evoked by any form of constraint. To this it may be replied that the absence of that attitude of love to God and man through which the law of man's duty is fulfilled, is evidence that the true relations of a man to God and to his neighbour are not recognised by him, that he is in a state of culpable ignorance of them. The Goodness of God is not acknowledged, the claim of Humanity is not responded to. Such an attitude of mind marks an essential moral deficiency and perversion. Man has *no right* to withhold his love toward others and toward God, they being God's children and his

brethren, and God being supreme in Goodness and righteousness. To do so is symptomatic of a wrong state of "the heart." Furthermore, the love that is commanded is not a mere sentiment, not a mere ebullition of feeling which is casually induced and fitful in its duration. It involves the combined energies of the mind, the desires and the will. "With all thy heart and soul and strength and mind." It does not consist in the mere excitement of emotion, any more than in vehemence of profession. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." It is a love to Supreme Goodness which is at once reasonable and emotional, a benevolence which is a steadfast disposition,—the deliberate habit and purpose of the will to do good to all men as opportunity occurs, a goodwill towards others which is not diverted even by the ill deserts of the unthankful and the evil.

The Good Will, which as wholly controlled by the moral reason Kant declared to be the one and only absolutely good thing in the world "or even outside of the world,"[1] is, in the Ethics of Christianity, the will which is motived and inspired by Love. The several virtues of the Christian character are forms of its activity differing from each other owing to the diverse situations which are the outward occasions of

[1] Kant's "Metaphysic of Morality": Watson's "Philosophy of Kant," p. 225.

its exercise. The several Christian duties are man's acknowledgment of the practical demands made upon this universal principle of Christian conduct in the various spheres of his life, whether domestic, social, industrial or religious. In their outward manifestations, virtues and duties, it has been said, "are as infinite as the passions to be regulated, or the situations which have to be adequately met." [1] Yet virtue in its essence is one. A violation of it in any particular is an offence against the vital principle which is the source of all its modes and forms. This oneness of the inner essence of virtue is recognised in the statement that "whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all" (James ii. 10). It is so, because man's moral life is a unity. If a man acted up to the full measure of his duty towards himself as a moral personality, in view of his individual ethical End, he would necessarily in doing so acquit himself aright in his duties towards God and towards his fellow-men. If "a man to his own self is true, it follows as the night the day, he cannot then be false" to any other being. All duties whatsoever are for the doer "personal duties"; and at the same time, in the ethics which is based on Christian belief, all duties without exception have a Godward reference. When a character or an act is approved by the Christian conscience, the moral judgment pronounced upon it is believed to be in accordance

[1] Muirhead, "Elements of Ethics," p. 207.

with the divine judgment, and to express an absolute moral truth. The approval if unconditionally asserted, is not maintained merely as the private opinion of an individual, but as reflecting the mind of God. All Christian duty is in a real sense performed "as unto God, and not merely unto men," and as giving effect to the will of God.

No exhaustive enumeration therefore of the virtues and duties of the Christian life is possible. Christ formulated no system of laws to be observed with technical accuracy. He went behind the letter of the law to its spirit. He announced the comprehensive principles of the ethical life. The adequacy and permanence of the ethics of Christianity for all times and all conditions of human society are assured, not by detailed rules and statutes to meet all situations, but by the relevancy and adaptability of its principles to all man's moral exigencies, and by their affinity with all elements of moral value which the progress of the centuries discloses to man's apprehension and aspirations. Reverence towards God, active benevolence towards men, forgiveness of injuries, all other forms of Christian righteousness, are seen to flow from its principles, and to be applications of them in the infinitely varied circumstances which emerge in the experience of the individual and in the history of the race. Christian virtue consists in those habits of character which truly express those principles in life and conduct. But while no detailed and complete catalogue of virtues with their

implied duties is available, we have the supreme authority of Christ for the broad and general division of them into those having a special reference to God, and those which relate to our fellow-men. Christian duty towards God consists in maintaining in thought and act that attitude towards God which alone is consistent with the character of God as made known by Christ. Christian duty towards men consists in rendering to them individually and collectively whatever is due to them in the light of their relationship to us as Christianity defines it.

I. Duties towards God.

Reverence towards God is love to Him, blended with a profound sense of His Majesty and Goodness. Reverence is morally due from man to all beings superior to him, in proportion to their goodness, and supremely due to the Being who is greatest and best. To withhold it even from human excellence is a moral delinquency. A decay of reverence in any age or individual is synonymous with an increasingly frivolous outlook upon life, an insensibility to the truth and reality of things, and is the consequence of a materialistic estimate of the values of life. Reverence is no mere trembling before unseen and inscrutible power. It is widely different from the terror the savage feels towards the demoniacal beings in whose propitiation and control his religion, such as it is, largely consists. It is the combination of awe and love in which a dread, which in

itself would be servile, is transformed by a sense of gratitude, and in which an affection which might err in the way of presumption is exalted by a consciousness of God's greatness. It is man's proper attitude to God as "our Father which is in heaven." It is the consequence of a recognition of the Deity as infinitely powerful and righteous, and at the same time as actuated by a perfect benevolence.

Trust is inseparable from Reverence. That reliance upon the undeviating steadfastness of the order of nature, which is the postulate of Science, logically involves trust in the character of the Power behind nature, whose self-consistency and dependableness are expressed in the continuity and reliability of law in the natural world. Trust in God is the assurance that was expressed by Christ in the words, "If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not." Going into the midst of dangers which threatened His life, He exhibited the confidence begotten of the certainty of the presence and protection of God. It is the confidence of one walking securely in the light of the sun which reveals the path of safety through dangers which would prove fatal in the dark. The burden of life with its changes and unforeseen possibilities is relieved by such a trust. It banishes fears suggested by the uncertainty of the future, allaying undue anxiety as to what may be on the morrow, and as to life's inevitable end, whose time and circumstances are confidently left in the hand of God.

Closely associated with Reverence and Trust is *Humility*, which is grounded in a right attitude towards the Supreme Being. It has a God-ward, rather than a man-ward, reference. "The humility which Jesus demands is humility towards God."[1] True self-knowledge by man is possible only in the presence of the Divine Righteousness. A man does not learn what he is by comparison of himself with others. He can see himself truly only in the light of the Ideal. One is aware of the depth of the valley through which his path lies, not when his eye is on the objects by the wayside, but when it is directed to the heights which tower above him. As reverence and trust are consequences of an apprehension of the Divine Character in its wisdom, power and love, humility is the cognate appreciation of the dependence and comparative inferiority of man's position in the scale of existence. The virtue was not unknown to the Greek moralists, but meant for them little more than the sober self-estimate which experience is calculated to produce in an ingenuous nature. Arrogance and overweening self-will were denounced as unreasonable in the sight of men and as impious towards the gods. In the Greek Drama the insolent pride[2] that sets the gods at defiance is overtaken with a dire nemesis. The Old Testament taught that human pride was hateful to God and "goeth before destruction." It is stated

[1] E. F. Scott, "The Teaching of Jesus," p. 104. [2] ὕβρις.

that part of the penalty of Ahab's wickedness was remitted "because he humbled himself before God." God's requirements were said to be fulfilled by the man who practised justice and mercy towards his fellows, and who walked *humbly with his God*. The virtue is based on a just recognition, on man's part, of the divine Majesty and forbearance. "There is mercy with Thee that Thou mayst be *feared*." A purely scientific conception of the Universe tends to induce a frame of mind which lacks some of the elements of a religious humility. Science views the material scene of man's life as a minor world, attached to a sun inferior in size to countless other luminaries in a Space to which no limits can be discovered. When it further predicts a gradual change in the conditions of physical life on this planet, whose probable issue will be the obliteration of the gains of civilization and of the triumphs of intellect recorded in its history and the ultimate extinction of life in it, such cosmic speculations deal with events whose magnitude and trend are calculated to impress upon man a sense of his insignificance, and to abase all illusions as to his power and self-sufficiency. The Humility which has a prominent place in the Christian character is such a lowliness of mind, but qualified by gratitude and trust. It is prepared to commit with confidence, the interests of the individual and the race to the foresight and disposal of the Power which overrules all things for good. The Christian virtue specially

implies a consciousness of man's moral limitations and shortcomings. The vision of the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, caused the prophet to exclaim, " I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." The thought of the unapproachable holiness of God inspired the belief that " no man could see God and live," a form of humility in which the dread of the Divine was not relieved by a full Christian trust and love. There was absent from it the belief in the possibility of that " purity of heart," whose highest blessedness is to " see God." Christian Humility realises the greatness and goodness of God at once as a reason for self-abasement, and as the ground of hope for humanity in its unworthiness and weakness.

Resignation is the term in which Butler[1] sums up all those dispositions which together constitute the true attitude of man towards God. He says, " Resignation to the will of God is the whole of piety." It is not a mere submission to the inevitable, but acquiescence in a Will which is approved " as good and acceptable and perfect " (Rom. xii. 2). Reverence, Humility, Trust, Hope, Love unite in it to evoke that voluntary surrender of self to God which is man's " reasonable service." " Our resignation to the Will of God may be said to be perfect, when our will is lost and resolved up into His ;

[1] Sermon XIV.

when we rest in His will as our end, as being itself most just and right and good."[1] This is the attitude of Christ throughout His life and in the prospect of His death. It is a disposition which passes naturally alike into the passive obedience of Endurance and into the active obedience of Service. It also finds a natural expression in *Worship*, whose outward forms react upon and confirm the reverential and acquiescent spirit. In Worship the divine presence is sought, and the divine goodness thankfully acknowledged. That the subjective effect of worship on the worshipper may be thus morally beneficial in the highest degree, it must be offered to the God who is approached as the Hearer and Answerer of prayer. It is addressed to Him in the belief that the prayer will be granted in that sense and manner which for him who offers it are best, because in accordance with the perfect will of Him who answers it. All Christian petition is implicitly prayer not merely for what seems good, but for what is really best for the suppliant, and for those for whom he intercedes; and of that God is the only infallible Judge. It does not appear that this attitude of man towards the Deity can be consciously maintained in individuals and promoted in a community, in the absence of those outward and regular forms of devotion which it is the duty of the Church to provide. It is an essential part of the function

[1] Sermon XIV.

of the Church to be the custodian of worship, and to assert its necessity.

II. Duties towards Others.

The Christian disposition towards others is that of "loving our neighbour as ourself." It is "like unto" the other commandment, in that it asserts love to be the vital principle of the virtues and right conduct having reference to others and their interests. Virtue being a habitual attitude of mind, and duty the form of conduct in accordance with it, it follows that Christian virtue and duty as regards others are the attitude and behaviour proper to our relation to them as interpreted by Christianity. The Fatherhood of God implies the brotherhood of men. The love to them that is required is a principle of habitual action towards them because of this common origin and dependence of all. The negative commandments in the Second Table of the Mosaic Law, forbidding the injuring of our neighbour either by outward act (VI., VII., VIII., IX.), or in thought and desire (X.), are at once included in, and completed by, the injunction of a positive and active benevolence which, in all cases that arise, is "the fulfilling of the law."

The form in which the second great command is expressed suggests (*a*) the measure, and (*b*) the sphere, of the love to our neighbour.

(*a*) Its measure is the necessary regard to his own

good which is innate in every one. An interest in self, a will to one's own well-being, is essential if life is to be preserved, much more if it is to attain its end. This self-love is not selfishness, which is its abuse, when it is so exaggerated as to exclude the care for others and the rendering to them their due. The self-love that is a wholly right motive is that which seeks the true end, one's real good as an individual, the realisation of his true and highest self, fullness of life. To seek that End is a self-evident duty obligatory on each—to reach it is the accomplishment of his destiny, the fulfilment of God's will for him. It implies that the preservation of one's own life is a personal duty, save when some higher call to service or self-sacrifice for others requires that the life be risked or even surrendered. Voluntary suicide cannot be reconciled with a man's duty either to God or to himself. The difference between the Christian and the Stoic conscience is nowhere more marked than here. Suicide was not only permitted by Stoicism, but in some cases recommended, as a dignified mode of triumphing over circumstances which rendered life undesirable. It was the assertion by the wise man of his independence of external things, and that he viewed the life which he ended as itself among " things indifferent." [1] From the Christian view of man's relation to God it follows that his life is not his own to destroy at his

[1] Zeller, " Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics," p. 320.

will, that he is accountable for it and the use he makes of it to Him who alone has the right to prolong or to end it. Man's duty to himself is to make the most of his life, whatever may be his circumstances or his prospects. It requires of him obedience to the laws of physical health, as conducing both to his own welfare and to his usefulness as a member of society. It requires of him the exercise and cultivation of his mental faculties, whose development is necessary to the fulfilment in any worthy degree of the possibilities of his nature. It requires the culture of all the elements in his soul which respond to the appeal of the higher values of life—of the True, the Beautiful, the Good. If the ideal of Christian service is to give self for others, the service has moral significance in proportion as the self given is such as to enrich the recipients. The love of self which is the measure of love to others is that righteous self-interest which seeks the realisation of the self in the Ethical End.

(*b*) The Sphere of this love to our neighbour is as wide as humanity. Neighbourhood is interpreted as embracing all men. It is not limited by considerations of blood-relationship (as in a tribal state of society), nor by those of citizenship (as in the independent city-states of antiquity), nor by those of nationality (as in the pagan form of the virtue of *amor patriae*). It transcends all barriers, both natural and artificial. The Samaritans were aliens with whom the Jew had no dealings, and who met

the Jew's exclusiveness with a corresponding hostility. Yet the Samaritan of the Parable was shown to be the true neighbour to him who fell among the thieves. In the world with its teeming millions of "brethren," this fraternity must remain to a large extent potential and implicit. Yet the reality of it demands the manifestation of the attitude involved in it, and fulfilment of the duties implied by it, whenever the opportunity occurs. The catholicity of the Christian spirit which regards every one, even the unlovely and the undeserving, as a member of the common brotherhood, and to be treated as such, is subversive of the narrow patriotism whose tendency to dislike and despise the people of other countries is often as much in evidence as its activity in the interests of those of its own. It is also opposed to the mutual antipathies of the various social castes, which are the fruitful cause of many evils and dangers in the community. Class hatred is at once anti-Christian in temper and in conflict with those aims of justice and social progress which those who advocate it profess to have in view. Its ostensible object is to redress forcibly, and therefore in an irrational way, those inequalities and wrongs which are to be rectified through the action of that principle of Christian brotherhood with which it is at variance. That principle, translated into practice, is the fulfilment of the great law of the moral life as stated by Kant, "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thy own person, or in that of another,

as an end, and never merely as a means to an end." Cicero conceived of a worthy friendship as that in which the friend is viewed as another self.[1] Christianity teaches men to find their highest good in the good of others, and to love them for the sake of the Christ in them (Matt. xxv. 40).

(1) The *humility* which is the fitting attitude of man towards God, has its counterpart in the Christian virtue of *meekness* in men's deportment towards each other. One who has acquired a true self-knowledge in the light of the greatness and goodness of God can no longer assert his own claims and merits in a selfish and aggressive bearing towards his fellow-men. Meekness is a form in which love to others exhibits itself. It is far from being that mean-spirited type of character, unduly self-deprecatory and self-distrustful, which is associated with a feeble and ineffective personality. It is the disposition of the self-controlled, the considerate, the forbearing in word and deed, even in the face of provocation. Experience proves that these qualities at their best are characteristics of the strong, not of the weak. Their opposite is the disposition to court admiration or praise, to seek to outshine others, to be eager to attract attention, which are signs of a weak and

[1] Ipse enim se quisque diligit, non ut aliquam a se ipse mercedem exigat caritatis suae, sed quod per se quisque sibi carus est; quod nisi idem in amicitiam transferetur, verus amicus nunquam reperietur: *est enim is qui est tanquam alter idem*—Cic. De Amicitia, XXI.

dependent nature rather than of true strength. It has nothing in common with the "slave morality" which Nietzsche represents as the Christian type in his travesty of Christianity, because of the honour it gives to forbearance, humility, forgiveness, and kindred dispositions. To Nietzsche's statements it has been replied that a "slave-morality" accords rather with that of his own ideal of the superman. The slave's ideal is the aggressor who crushes all opposition and makes all interests subservient to his will. That is the kind of man whom the slave-mind would fain emulate. It can conceive none higher. The slave's consciousness of inferiority and dependency revenges itself on society in picturing one who is masterly in the pursuit of his aims, and in imagining how he would act if he were such an one. The man of free-birth and generous nurture is obsessed by no such sense of degradation, and is inspired by no such admiration for overbearing forcefulness and self-will. Hence in actual life a deference to others and modesty of demeanour are the marks, not of the slave, but of the well-born and well-bred. "As the occasion may require, he is equally ready to follow or to lead. In either case his princely motto is *Ich dien*—I serve."[1] The quality of Christian meekness is the source of that self-collected, subdued and unpresuming bearing towards others which readily commands their confidence and esteem. It

[1] Streeter, "Reality," p. 148.

does not consciously stoop to conquer, but in stooping conquers in fact. "The meek shall inherit the earth." It is a form of character and conduct in which the principle of love expresses itself,—for apart from that principle and the sanctions involved in it, no reason can be given why each man should not claim for himself the very utmost which his strength and opportunity will enable him to appropriate with impunity.

(2) Equally characteristic of the Christian attitude towards others is the virtue of a *forgiving spirit.* The forgiveness of offenders, to forego personal resentment, to abstain from retaliation, were excellences by no means ignored by the classical moralists. Aristotle says that the man who keeps the just mean in matters of offence "is loath to take vengeance and very ready to forgive."[1] But the context shows that the forbearance meant by him was something different from the Christian virtue. The Stoics inculcated forgiveness, but not in the spirit of Christ's saying, "If thy brother sin against thee seven times in the day, and seven times turn again to thee saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." The recollection of injuries and a purpose of retaliation were deprecated by Stoicism as interfering with the "apathy," the passionless indifference, of the Wise Man. It was beneath the dignity of the wise man, as "self-sufficient," to treat as

[1] Nicomachean Ethics, 4, 5, 4.

a serious evil any wrong that another could inflict. To do so was forbidden by the self-respect of the "magnanimous man," for it would be a confession of inferiority to admit that another had the power to excite in him the passion of revenge. Seneca says,[1] "I will be pleasant to friends, gentle and good-natured to enemies"; "Give aid even to enemies with a gentle hand."[2] Yet elsewhere he said, "There is no reason why thou shouldest be angry; pardon them; they are all mad." The words from the Cross were, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."[3] The contrast is due to the fact that the Christian virtue is a necessary form in which the love which fulfils the law toward our neighbour realises itself in actual life. A benevolent disposition seeking the good of all makes it possible to forgive the offender, being inconsistent with the continuance of a hostile feeling towards him; love to our neighbour ensures forgiveness of him, because one cannot sincerely seek another's good in the sense of Christ's commandment, without forgiving him. This Christian placability is reinforced by a sense of one's own need of the divine forgiveness. In proportion as we are prepared to forgive others, we are emboldened to ask the divine

[1] De. Vit. beat. 20: De Otio 28.

[2] In De Clementia I, 5, he says, "Magni auten animi proprium est placidum esse Tranquillumque, et injurias atque offensiones superne despicere."

[3] Lightfoot, "Paul and Seneca," p. 287.

love to take the same form in our case. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." The atrocity of the behaviour of the unmerciful servant in the Parable (Matt. xviii. 23), lay in an inhumanity which did not recognise what was due to his fellow-servant, even when his Lord by His compassion towards him had shown him what his duty was. "Forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. iv. 32). And as in the Christian scheme of life forgiveness is to be sincere, so it is to be long-suffering as regards both the greatness of the personal offence, and the frequency of its repetition; "not until seven times, but until seventy times seven." It is of course objected that an indiscriminate overlooking of injuries offers an encouragement to wrong-doing. But Christian forgiveness is not indiscriminate. As effecting the complete restoration of the injured relationship, it is conditional upon repentance on the part of the offender. "If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (Luke xviii. 3). God's pardon is given to the penitent, not to the obdurate. Even if one forgives for the seventh time him who does him ill, it is after the latter turns to him, saying, I repent (Luke xvii. 4). The brother who sins against us may be reasoned with by ourselves or others. If he hears reason, he will acknowledge his fault, so dissociating himself from it, and Christian forgiveness will bury the cause of the offence in oblivion. "Thou hast gained thy brother" (Matt. xviii. 15).

But if he refuses to hear reason when convicted not only by the wronged individual, but by the unbiassed judgment of independent witnesses, "let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." Though the estrangement may continue, it is not embittered, on the part of the injured party, by revengeful feelings or the desire of retaliation. It goes no further than letting the other alone, while the hope remains that he may yet come to a right mind. For whatever his offence may have been, it cannot interfere with the fact that he is "thy brother." It may still be said that even when thus qualified, the suppression of the natural inclination to inflict retribution on the offender gives undue immunity to transgressors, who in the interests of righteousness ought to be made to suffer for the ill they do. Yet a deeper view of life proves, that, however, difficult to practise, the Christian virtue in matters of personal injury is in accordance with the truth of things as seen in the dispassionate light of reason, and in the final issue is justified by its general effects both in the case of the offender and the wronged. The conduct it prescribes tends, much more effectually than its opposite, to bring the culprit to a better frame of mind, and so to end the discord; whereas retaliation has the contrary effect of perpetuating and increasing the enmity, and the evils it entails. The beginning of strife is "as when one letteth out water. Therefore leave off contention, *before the teeth be shown*" (Prov. xvii. 14). It follows that

a Christian resentment against the wrong-doer is permissible only in so far as he continues to identify himself with the injurious purpose and act. It is a moral indignation, as that was which Christ displayed to hypocritical conduct, and towards those who put stumbling-blocks in the way of the innocent. It stands in implacable opposition to the sin ; but it is consistent with that readiness to further the true good of the sinner which is Christian love towards him personally. A Father who is wronged by an undutiful son may feel towards him a deep resentment, which yet coexists with parental affection for him. It is because of the love that the resentment is great against that in him which has disappointed the love. It is not retaliatory. It seeks the good of the sinner, while condemning the sin.

In a similar light must be viewed the precept to "love your enemies." In this case the injuries referred to are not casual offences, possibly due in some measure to want of thought, but those which proceed from determined hostility and malice. The injunction to love persons who so act implies even towards such a refraining from bitter and revengeful thoughts ; not the affectation of a warm and sentimental regard for them, which is impossible, but what experience proves to be possible,—a settled purpose of benevolence, a readiness to do good to them, "not rendering evil for evil, but overcoming evil with good." This is a practical attitude of well-wishing and well-doing towards them which

is under the command of the will, and which, like all forgiveness of personal injuries, tends to work for good and is justified by its results. "For never in this world does hatred cease by hatred; hatred ceases by love; this is always its nature."[1]

It is sometimes asserted that capital punishment is unmerciful and unchristian in that it gives the criminal no opportunity for that restoration to such a relation to society, as should always wait upon repentance and reform. The main justification of capital punishment is generally held to be its deterrent effect; it is maintained as tending towards the greater security of human life. The release of the criminal who has taken the life of another is a menace to the safety of society. Yet even in the case of one who has committed the irreparable crime of murder, the Christian principle forbids a spirit of vengeance and retaliation in the carrying out of the supreme sentence. It condemns the summary "justice" of lynching the culprit, because by such violent redress, whatever be the enormity of the crime, its penalty is inflicted in a passionate and vindictive manner. Capital punishment in accordance with legal justice is not the negation of the principle of love even to the criminal. While acquiescing in his death, those who believe him to have deserved his fate do not cherish towards him a personal hatred. Christian love rejoices to believe

[1] "Buddhist Tripitaka," Beal, p. 113.

in the sincerity of any professions of repentance on his part. It would gladly cherish the hope that even for such there is the future promised to the penitent thief.

(3) The Virtue which is "the fulfilling of the law" is not only the disposition which bears and forbears, but the love which *serves others*.[1] It is the attitude towards others which follows upon the recognition that humanity is "a kingdom of ends,"[2] according to Kant's well-known phrase. Men implement the duties of membership in that Kingdom through the mutual service in which each finds an essential part of his own good in the good of his neighbour. When it is inquired what is the intention and extent of this service of others, the answer is found in the standard and precedent prescribed in the words "thy neighbour as thyself." A person may cherish a very unworthy kind of self-love, seeking its whole satisfaction in bodily comfort or in the pleasures of the senses. Such a person would be unlikely to aim at any higher good for his neighbour than he desired for himself. The good of "ourself" therefore, by which the will to promote the good of "our neighbour" is regulated and defined, is the Good which consists in the Christian End,—not merely the satisfaction of physical wants, but the well-being of the true and highest self. The true interests of his moral personality are the same as those of our own. A genuine Christian benevolence or love seeks to further the

[1] Gal. V. 13. [2] "Metaphysic of Morality," 281.

same self-realisation in others at which it aims as the highest personal End for itself. "The good which social virtue seeks must be of no meaner rank or lesser significance that that which personal virtue contemplates as its goal. If the attainment of many and varied and lasting pleasures is a poor account of the moral man's ideal of himself, it will be insufficient also as a description of the good he can do others."[1] Christian altruism expresses itself in a service of others which aims at their good in the largest and highest sense. Its scope is the promotion of their intellectual, moral and social well-being. In the accomplishment of its mission in the world, it necessarily has a regard to the lower and bodily conditions of man's existence. It would be vain were it to confine itself to the spiritual interests of those who lack the necessaries of physical life. It is mockery to set the *summun bonum* of a full self-realisation before those whose circumstances condemn them to a chronic condition of insufficient nourishment, of bodily ill-health, or of disordered nerves, who are reduced to a manner of living that is inconsistent with physical or moral hygiene. Christ accompanied His mission of spiritual regeneration by acts of beneficence, such as the feeding of the hungry and the healing of the sick. The good of others which is the objective of Christian service embraces all that is conducive to their highest well-being, including its

[1] Sorley, "The Moral Life," p. 121.

physical conditions. It is to be rendered without a view to a return either in gratitude or in kind. Cicero says,[1] "Whether we bestow or requite a favour, duty requires that, if other things are equal, we should first help those who need our help most. That is not the way of the world; for men are most eager to serve one from whom they expect the greatest return, even though he needs no help." The sentiment is in keeping with Christ's admonition that acts of kindness be not confined to friends or kindred or rich neighbours, but that they be conferred upon the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, "because they have not wherewith to recompense thee." Such charity is approved in the religion of Islam and in the ethics of Buddhism. But the sustained and systematic effort to do good to men's bodies as well as to save their souls, has from the beginning been an essential part of practical Christianity. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." It is to the Christ in man that the service has been rendered. Such service is raised to the highest dignity and moral worth by reason of its object and of its disinterestedness. In that Kingdom which consists of those who are on the way towards the realisation of the Christ-self as the ethical End for all men, the path to honour and greatness is the service of others, as themselves ends of supreme

[1] De Off. 1, 15.

value,—a service which is rendered in the spirit and in the interests of the Kingdom. The worth and significance of a man's life are not measured by the extent of his power over others ; Greatness in the Kingdom does not consist in the ability to make them the means of his own aggrandisement. " Not so shall it be among you." " The mind of Christ," according to St. Paul, was that of One " who though He was rich, for others' sake became poor," who " took the form of a servant," and who was exalted in honour above all because he descended more deeply than any other into the humility of a service which was perfected in the surrender of His life for others. The principle of " dying to live " is exemplified in Christian life and service. A man's life is so bound up with other lives, that he realises himself in that service of others by which they are helped towards the attainment of the Ethical End.

The principle of love, that benevolence to others whose standard is man's enlightened regard for his own true good, determines the Christian attitude towards property. No man has an absolute right to any possession ; " the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." The " owner " is in a position of stewardship with regard to that which he possesses. He holds it as a trust. Legally he can do with it what he pleases ; morally he is limited to such administration of it as is in the interests of the physical well-being, and of the moral and spiritual life, of himself and others. Its legimate use is in providing

for necessary wants, and, beyond these, in procuring those things which directly or indirectly subserve an ethical purpose. To spend it on display, or on useless luxury which ends with the pleasure of the moment, is an abuse of it. Costly expenditure on fine pictures, on a valuable library, on means of recreation, is to be justified by the moral and spiritual values realized by it. Its results, when so warranted, are not exhausted in the mere gratification of the individual or of the hour, nor are they approved when the sum total of the benefit derived from them comes far short of what it might otherwise have been. The Christian use of property, whether in money or real estate, is such as is conducive to the furtherance of the Christian End, in its individual and its social aspects.

In the Christian community in Jerusalem the spirit of brotherhood, together with the belief in the speedy coming of The Kingdom, resulted in the renunciation on the part of many of their possessions in the interests of all members alike (Acts ii. 44 ; iv. 32). The idea behind this movement seems to have been that " each should give according to his ability and receive according to his need." Such a manifestation of new-born zeal in the circumstances can be understood and even admired, as the writer of " The Acts " evidently intends that it should be. It was plainly a temporary expedient. It did not solve the problem of poverty in that community, which continued to be dependent on extraneous

succour from their Gentile brethren, from whom St. Paul collected contributions on their behalf. The ethics of Christianity allows to him that hath the retention and proper use of what belongs to him whether by inheritance, or as the fruit of his diligence. Yet the attitude of Christ towards riches is one of distrust and of caution. He regards their possession as imposing a severe test upon a man's character. "With what difficulty shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God" (Mark x. 25). His possessions were the cause why the rich man made "the great refusal." It must indeed be remembered that Christ's allusions to the subject of riches had reference to conditions that obtained in the very limited social sphere which came under his personal survey. There is nothing in his utterances to suggest that He had in His view future economic changes, and the developments of civilization associated with the increase of wealth. What is common to that time and ours is the tendency of the world to make money its God. It is as true now as it was then, that men "cannot serve God *and* Mammon." For this reason, because of the passionate attraction it frequently exerts, exciting a cupidity which is ruthless and unscrupulous in the attainment of its end, it was and remains "the mammon of unrighteousness." However necessary a competent share of it may be for the purposes of life, the beneficent part (on the whole) that it has played in the progress and civilization of the world has been associ-

ated with much that is evil, in respect both of the methods by which it has been often obtained and of the manner in which it has been frequently employed. In many cases there is the danger or certainty that the love of it will prove stronger than the love of our neighbour and even than the rightful regard for self. How many have failed to act on the principle that it profits a man nothing if he gain the whole world and lose his "life"! Christ instructs men to "make for themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." It may be so used that the material treasure shall prove a means towards spiritual and enduring ends. It is moralised when so employed as to subserve the moral end of the realisation of the possessor's true self, and of the true life of others. It is consecrated by being made the instrument of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

The Christian virtues and duties are thus forms and applications of the principle of Love to God and to men. The character whose inward state and outward activities are habitually regulated by that principle, is "the good tree which bringeth forth good fruit." It expresses itself in obedience to that "law of liberty" by which St. James says that men's words and actions are to be judged (James ii. 12). The "law of Christ" to which St. Paul declared his subjection (Cor. ix. 21), was not a code of moral statutes any more than of cere-

monial ordinances. Upon the individual conscience, quickened and enlightened by the spirit of a universal love, is devolved the obligation of freely discerning what in any given case fidelity to the claims of brotherhood implies. This inward autonomy of the Christian life is the culmination of the long and gradual development of man's moral consciousness, and marks the highest grade of the ethical Life. It marks his progress beyond the various stages of his moral immaturity and tutelage in the past, and his attainment of his moral majority in that "service which is perfect freedom."

Conscience and the sense of moral obligation existed in germ in a primitive state of society. In early tribal conditions, man's individuality was largely merged in the life of the social group of which he was a member. The symbol of its unity was the tribal god, whose authority, of an arbitrary kind, was regarded as supreme over all members of the tribe. It did not occur to primitive men to question the traditional customs of the clan, with whose observance the welfare of all was conceived to be bound up, and whose due performance was believed to be the behest of the local deity. The tribal mind was the mind of each member of the community. What was traditionally believed and practised by the group was received implicitly as the rule of faith and conduct for the individual. When he conformed to it, the "tribal self" in him approved his conduct. When through passion or selfish desire, he trans-

gressed it, his disapproval of himself was the reflected disapprobation of his fellows. He judged his actions from the standpoint of the tribe. The customs and taboos of his community through association with religious sanctions and the fear of the god, were sacred in his eyes, and the group mind in him condemned him if he outwardly violated them.

A further stage is reached when in a progressive society it becomes necessary to replace and supplement unwritten tribal customs by written laws, enacted by an authority having power to enforce its dictates. Such was the legislation of the Twelve Tables at Rome. This condition of subjection to an external order imposed by the will of another was that of the Hebrew race, when they received the Law as having a divine origin and sanction. It was believed that the Commandments were written on the Tables of stone by the finger of God (Ex. xxxi. 18). They were given directly by a "jealous God," who had the power and will to reward obedience to them and to punish transgressors. An infringement of them was an act of rebellion against the divine Legislator, and at the same time an offence against the integrity of the nation. The chief stress would inevitably be laid upon an outward and formal observance of the written code. Only gradually and by the more reflective natures would the moral judgment be extended to the inward character which is in accord with the outward requirements, as having that disposition which is

right in itself and approved by the divine Law-giver. We know how this Law as interpreted by the literalism and particularism of later Judaism became to many, like St. Paul, a burden too grievous to be borne. He found himself so frequently condemned by it, it was so powerless to rectify the heart, that to him its chief function proved to be the imparting of a knowledge of sin, rather than the effectual provision of a means of righteousness and "life." While that righteousness which is "life" was desired as the supreme end and interest of man, the necessity was realised of obtaining deliverance from a moral bondage to the letter that killeth. According to St. Paul's interpretation of history, the impossibility of fulfilling the requirements of the written code, together with the moral failure of the Gentile world, prepared the way for the acceptance of Christianity with its ethical freedom and inwardness. The outward ordinance of particular laws for all cases was set aside as a fetter and hindrance to the moral life of the mature man, God's son (Gal. iv. 1-7), which consists in the free obedience of a son in harmony with his Father's will to the inward and all-inclusive law of love. In this sense St. James says, "If ye fulfil the royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye shall do well; so speak and so do as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty";[1] and St. Paul,

[1] James ii. 12.

"Ye were called into liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1]

In giving this principle the fundamental place in the Ethics of Christianity, Christ did not destroy the Law, but fulfilled it. He did not prescribe definite rules, or detailed enactments to be kept in a spirit of technical legality, irrespective of circumstances which might alter the whole moral bearings of the case in point. He dealt with particular cases as a means of illustrating the principle. He went behind the letter of the law to its spirit. He who possesses the general principle can freely for himself deduce from it the rule to be followed in each case of conduct and of duty as it arises. He lives and acts not in a bondage which blindly obeys the letter, but in the liberty of one who knows the Truth, who by the Truth is made free, and enabled to render an enlightened and spontaneous obedience.

In regard to the subject of marriage and divorce it does not appear that Christ departed from His usual method, or that even as regards this sphere of obligation He assumed, as has sometimes been asserted, the rôle of a legislator of particular enactments. In His eyes marriage is in its very nature

[1] Gal. v. 13, 14.

strictly monogamous—a union in which the two lives cease to be separate. "They twain shall be one flesh." In its essence, it is to Him a union which cannot be dissolved at the caprice or fancy of either party. "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder." To many it seems going beyond the evidence to assert that it was His intention to prohibit divorce in all circumstances, or even to assert the infidelity of one of the parties to be the only ground for it. It is alleged that that sin in fact ruptures the marriage bond; and the same might be said of "such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or the civil magistrate." The Westminster Confession of Faith permits dissolution of marriage on these grounds, with the safeguard against mere levity and inconstancy that "a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed, and the persons concerned in it are not left to their own wills or discretion in their own case." ("Confession of Faith," Chap. XXIV. 6). Christ, consistently with His manner of teaching, announces the ideal principle of marriage. He treats it as an institution of supreme importance in the moral life of man. As His manner was, He stated what the relationship was in its true form, and did not lay down particular rules to meet those cases in which its conditions were not fulfilled.[1] The Christian

[1] See Dean Rashdall, "Conscience and Christ," p. 103 and foll. Canon Streeter, "Moral Adventure," p. 74 and foll.

conception of marriage, as derived from His whole attitude towards it, is set aside by those who facilitate divorce and sanction temporary and successive connections under the name of marriage. The ideal of Christian marriage must always remain that of a union which endures while both parties live. Only such a union can be the foundation of the Christian family. In the Christian home there are provided a sphere and an atmosphere in which the Christian virtues tend to be fostered and developed. There is the merging of the individual life in the larger life of the household. There is the natural tie which prompts to self-denial for the sake of the others. There is the finding of one's own honour and interest in the honour and welfare of the others, the learning to identify one's own good with the good of all.[1] The motive of the love of one's neighbour as one's self is there reinforced by a natural affection. The family founded upon the union of the twain appears to be the divinely ordained sphere of discipline in all elements of the type of character which is dis-

[1] It is interesting in this connection to quote Spencer's remarks in "The Data of Ethics," p. 204. "Tribes in which promiscuity prevails or in which marital relations are transitory, are incapable of much organisation. . . . Only where monogamic marriage has become general and eventually universal—only where there have been consequently established the closest ties of blood—only where family altruism has been most fostered, has social altruism become conspicuous."

tinctively Christian, and designed to qualify its members for membership in the Kingdom. The individual cases in which Christ's conception of marriage and of the family union is not fulfilled may be numerous enough in this imperfect world. Yet it is an ideal to be maintained and striven after as of extreme moral value, and no customs of society or legislative provisions which lower it in the reverence and practice of the community, can invoke His sanction. The claim for a laxity which would afford an easily abused remedy for hardship and unhappiness in the case of some, must yield to the strictness which is essential to the highest and enduring interests of society.

The Ethics of Christianity consists of Christ's principles and of those inferences and deductions from them in which His mind and will have been interpreted so as to answer the moral questions and solve the ethical problems which emerge in the life of the individual and in the progress of society. One attempting to propound a digest of particular moral rules or a scheme of decisions for special cases of conduct in His circumstances and time, would have found it impossible to avoid formulating ethical maxims which, if literally applied in subsequent times and in changed conditions, would prove obsolete and erroneous. Christ lived and taught in a society whose life and relationships were very different from those of the modern world. It was His method to impress His principles upon men's

minds by illustrating them in His teaching and by showing their application in incidents as they occurred. He set before men by precept and example the comprehensive principle of the love of their neighbour. In the dispute between brothers as to the inheritance, He gave no ruling by which that universal rule of action could become stereotyped in some legal phrase. He left those who wrangled over their respective rights to find for themselves the solution of their case, and gave them the clue to it when he bade them " to take heed and beware of covetousness." " If it (the Christian morality) was to remain adequate to the interpretation of the life of later times, it must content itself with the inculcation of a spirit, an attitude of the will." [1] Its adequacy consists not in the comprehensiveness of its casuistry, not in the finality of its statement of particular duties for all time, but in the relevancy of its principles to all possible moral situations, and in its capacity to appropiate as its own the unforeseen forms and elements of moral value which have been disclosed from age to age, as the Christian conscience in its growing enlightenment was able to apprehend them.

This free interpretation of the Founder's principles and their application to moral problems not referred to by Him, began immediately, in the Apostolic age, and many instances of it occur in the New

[1] Seth's Essays in " Ethics and Religion," p. 68.

Testament Epistles. Paul upheld the Master's principle that Love is "the fulfilling of the law." "It is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour."[1] Paul applied it freely in the circumstances which occurred in a form of society different from that of Galilee and Jerusalem. He had at times indeed to deal in a concrete manner with local phases of Christian life and conduct, on which his comments have for us only an indirect ethical interest. Changed conditions have for us obviated the need of circumstantial instruction as to the rights and wrongs of the use of meat which had been offered in sacrifice to idols. But the maxim of abstaining from any course of conduct in which our influence would prove a stumbling block to others who see things differently from us, is of enduring obligation, and can be seen to be a corollary of the inclusive commandment to love our neighbour as ourself. Particular injunctions regulating the reciprocal duties of slaves and their owners must cease with the abolition of slavery. Yet it is true for all forms of Society that those availing themselves of the services of others should render to them in return that which is just and equal, forbearing threatening and treating them as brethren; and that those who serve should do their work not with eye-service, but with fidelity, in singleness of heart, and under a sense of

[1] Rom. xiii. 10.

responsibility for the thoroughness with which they fulfil this duty. The mind of Christ was truly reflected in such precepts, though they had not, so far as we know, formed part of His actual teaching. The victory over Jewish exclusiveness in which Paul took a leading part, was evidently a true interpretation of Christ's view of the universal extension of His Kingdom. His forbidding His emissaries to go into the way of the Gentiles was obviously a temporary restriction, guarding them against the dissipation of their evangelical efforts at a time when the intensive concentration of their activities was essential to the future interests of the Kingdom. The universalism for which St. Paul contended was in harmony with the principle to promote the highest good of all men, whether Jew or Greek, barbarian, bond or free. Christ's denunciations had fallen with pointed severity upon those sins which specially abounded in His own social environment. His indignation was kindled against the iniquity of oppressing the weak and the helpless, of betraying the trust of the confiding, of devouring widows' houses, of transgressing the behests of justice and mercy and fidelity, while being punctilious about the performance of statutory dues. The Epistles, while they do not spare these crimes against humanity, hold up to more frequent reprobation such evils as litigiousness, slander, malice, which equally do violence to the claims of brotherly love. Even the putting away of falsehood and the practice of veracity

in men's dealings with each other, are required on the ground that "we are members one of another" (Eph. iv. 25). Factiousness, discord, bitterness, spitefulness, are to give place to deference, sympathy, the bearing of each other's burdens, to all that is conducive to that state of mutual considerateness and helpfulness, in which brotherly love seeketh not her own, but suffereth long and is kind.

The comprehensive survey of Christian life and duty in Romans xii. is a plea for those virtues and that conduct which secured the harmony and solidarity of the Christian communities in which the Kingdom of God was being progressively realised. Those belonging to it perform their part in the measure in which they behave as members one of another. It is for each to occupy his own place therein. Their several gifts are bestowed upon them to be used with diligence and disinterested zeal in the service of all. The love of the brethren is to be sincere and without hypocrisy, and as such it will not dissemble its antipathy to what is evil in others, while at the same time it will associate itself with, cleave to, all that is good in them, so helping them to overcome the evil and realise their best selves. It shows itself in Christian friendship and religious fellowship, in courtesy towards others, in ministration to those in need, in hospitality. It enters with cordiality into their joys, and with sympathy into their sorrows. Its prevalence creates a unity of mind and sentiment. It checks the ambition to excel and take a leading

part, and makes men give themselves to humble tasks of mutual service. As regards forgiveness and the treatment of the hostile and froward, it calls for behaviour in accordance with the principle which requires benevolence even towards those who are slow to reciprocate it, counselling men not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with Good (Rom. xii.).

Moral progress on Christian lines has resulted from the enlarging apprehension of the meaning and content of the ethical principles of Christ. It has been alleged that the Christian Morality belongs to the past, that it is antiquated and inadequate, that its Ideal Life, as portrayed in the Gospels, could not, in its oriental setting and restricted circumstances, exhibit a complete type of excellence to those who live under the altered conditions of modern times when the advances of science and the appreciation of literature and art have enlarged men's views as to the varied acquirements of an all-round character. It has even been asserted that the ethical attitude of Christianity is at fault inasmuch as it points backwards to an Ideal which has been realised nineteen centuries ago, instead of forwards to a Good as yet unattained, the striving toward which is the true moral vocation of humanity. To all such criticism, the answer has been suggested above. Christ's mission was to men's souls. Those who lose their souls can find profit in nothing else. His concern was with righteousness. Other interests came into

His view in so far as they had reference to righteousness and the Will of God. Whatsoever made in any degree for righteousness and was in accordance with the Will of God belonged implicitly to His province as a Teacher of Moral Truth. While the great principles of individual and social righteousness were announced and exemplified by Him, it does not follow that He could explain their bearing on all departments of human life, and on all questions of conduct which would arise in the future. For that He had neither time nor opportunity in His age and environment. Nor does it follow that the morality He inculcated has been fully understood, and in all its implications, by those to whom it has commended itself either in earlier or in subsequent times. They have apprehended its significance and requirements according to their capacity and to the enlightenment of their age; it has not yet been embraced in the totality of its aspects and issues by the moral consciousness of any individual or community. As there has been advancement to more adequate views of truth, alike in Theological thought and in the Scientific knowledge of nature, so has there been an increasing understanding of the mind of Christ with regard to Man's Life and duty. We may believe that the morality of Christ embodies the perfect and final Ethic of human life, and yet that the *whole* significance of Christ for the moral life of man is still as far from being fully recognised and comprehended, as His ethics is from being

generally and adequately practised in the world. It is still being unfolded by degrees to men's consciences. It has " yet many things to say to them."

This inherent progressiveness of Christian morality furnishes the reply to those who would represent it as but a temporary phase in the ethical development of mankind, and suggest that it has played its part and is in many respects inapplicable in the modern world with its altered modes of thought and changed values. Such censures overlook the fact that the Ethics of Christianity has abundantly manifested its capacity of appropriating as its own all elements of the true Good of man which have been won through the efforts and sacrifices of the past. There has been increasing understanding of the contents of the righteousness whose principle is love to God and man. Men's apprehension of the Christian Ethical Ideal has not been static and stereotyped. It has progressed in clearness and comprehensiveness. The social and economic developments of modern times, with the new relationships and duties created by them, are wholly foreign to the condition and ideas of the age in which Christianity came into the world. Yet its ethical principles offer what to many seems to be the sufficient and only solution of the moral problems with which we are confronted in our day.

Many in our time have been disposed to look to the progress of Science as the main ground for confidence in the future of mankind. When the chief place is thus assigned to knowledge and discovery in

promoting the highest interests of society, there is much significance in the statement of a well-known writer,[1] that, though it has often been taken for granted that the advancement of science must necessarily increase the welfare and happiness of mankind, this is a delusion which our age must discard. His conclusion is that science can be no substitute for virtue; for, while it immensely increases the ability of those in power to effect their purposes, he holds that, as things are, "the purposes of the holders of power are in the main evil." "Men are actuated by passions which distort their view; feeling an impulse to injure others, they persuade themselves that it is their interest to do so. They will not, therefore, act in the way which is in fact to their own interest, unless they are actuated by generous impulses which make them indifferent to their own interest. This is why the heart is as important as the head. By the heart I mean the sum total of kindly impulses. Where they exist, science helps them to be effective; where they are absent, science only makes men more cleverly diabolic."[2] The Ethics of Christianity would further maintain that "kindly impulses," in order to prove a reliable source of right conduct, must proceed from a rightly organised character, whose motives and actions are habitually determined by the love which "worketh no ill to its neighbour."

[1] Bertrand Russell, "Icarus, or The Future of Science," p. 57. [2] *Ibid.*

Spencer looks forward to a perfect condition of society in which "altruism of a social kind may be expected to attain a level at which it will be like parental altruism in spontaneity—a level such that ministration to others' happiness will become a daily need." [1] Sympathy with others is the power to which he trusts for the perfecting of man's social nature and for the performance of all social duties, —a sympathy which, he believes, "must advance as fast as conditions permit." Mill says,[2] "To do as one would be done by, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality." These and other secular views of the essence of morality have much in common with the Ethics of The Gospel. The ideal condition of human life in their view is that in which the good of each individual is found in the good of others, in which there is the complete "conciliation" of altruism and egotism. [3] It is eminently satisfactory to take note of such a measure of agreement among those whose views in some respects are widely divergent. It behoves us, however, to remember that, judged from the standpoint of Christian Ethics, the morality which does not assign a first and essential place to love to God excludes a fundamental element in a complete theory of the moral life and duty of man.

[1] Spencer, "Data of Ethics," p. 243.
[2] "Utilitarianism," Chap. II.
[3] "Data of Ethics," Chap. XIV.

V.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

V.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

The Christian type of character is that whose inward motives and outward manifestations in conduct are in accordance with the two great commandments requiring love to God and to man; Christian virtues and duties are applications of them. Love to God and to our neighbour had indeed been enjoined in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. vi. 5). "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18).[1] Love to God is the familiar theme of the Psalmists, and there have been no more strenuous advocates of social righteousness than the prophets. They insisted upon justice and mercy, and denounced oppression of the poor. They called for benevolence

[1] It may be said that the "neighbour" here meant is a fellow-Hebrew, one of "the children of thy people." Yet in verse 34, the same measure of love is bespoken for "the stranger that sojourneth with you." Even when so extended however, it has been pointed out that the literal precept applies no farther than to the *gerim* dwelling among the Jews, associated with them in daily life, and worshippers of the God of Israel.

towards the weak and the needy "and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh" (Is. lviii. 7). In the Apocryphal writings of later Judaism, the virtues of love and benevolence are fully recognised. In the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs" (vii. 6) Issachar is represented as saying, "I loved the Lord, likewise also every man with all my heart."[1] In view of similar utterances it may be asked in what sense Christianity has inaugurated a new ethical departure. In what sense is its morality original? It certainly did not exclude or repudiate those perceptions of righteousness, to which the conscience of man, where most enlightened, had attained in the long process of his ethical development. As has been remarked in another connection, Christ's appeal for verification of his moral truths was to the conscience in men. "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" (Luke xii. 57). He presupposed the ability of those addressed by Him to recognise for themselves the right and good, when set before them. He did not demand a blind acceptance of His moral sayings. He expected obedience to them, as commending themselves to sincere and unbiassed minds. He assumed that conscience when sufficiently enlightened will know the higher good when proposed to it. It will "approve the things that are more excellent" (Rom. ii. 18). Paul says that Christian love issues in such ethical intelligence and mature moral judg-

[1] Rashdall, "Conscience and Christ."

ment. "This I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all discernment, so that ye may approve the things that are excellent" (Phil. i. 9). The "Christian Conscience" is conscience developed and rendered sensitive, through training and experience, to "discern" the true ethical values (Heb. v. 14). Christ in recognising the dictates of man's conscience, claims as His own all of moral goodness that commends itself to man's unperverted moral discernment. In His ethics there is room for it, wherever it is found, by whatever moral code or form of religious belief it may be sanctioned. The very words in which He expressed His teaching closely resemble in not a few instances those of other moral teachers. As He was not the first to inculcate love to God and to our neighbour, so others before Him had announced the Golden Rule, at least in its negative form of not doing to others what we would not have them do to us. Others had taught moral truths illustrated by Him in His parables.

While it is thus true that the ethics of Christianity has a place and a value for all moral truth and goodness which have been discerned by the ethical insight and exemplified in the righteous lives of former times and other peoples, its originality appears in the deeper significance and greater comprehensiveness it imparts to the elements of the Good which it thus has made its own. Where the morality of the Old Testament was imperfect and

provisional, Christianity perfected and completed it. Christ came not to abolish the moral gains of the ages before Him, but to "fulfil" what was wanting in them. The Christian ideal of life brought into prominence virtues on which many previous ethical teachers had laid less emphasis—for example, forgiveness and humility. But the new departure occasioned by it in the moral history of the world is also marked by the deeper import and wider application given by it to virtues which from of old had been approved as such. They were expanded, matured, "sublimated" by it. It extends their meaning, and unfolds their content and implications. It has thus "fulfilled" the morality of the Law and the Prophets, and has raised to higher issues the virtues inculcated by other ethical teachers. The statement is sometimes made in a depreciatory sense that in repeating the precepts of others, it is not original. But those who make this a charge against the ethics of Christianity are in reality supporting its claim to comprehensiveness and to be the universal morality. If it had excluded elements of moral truth and goodness which were not divulged for the first time by its Founder, it would have proved itself to be but the creation of an age, without roots in the past, and without the capacity of making a sympathetic appeal to the moral nature of men of all ages and races. It received into itself the moral heritage of the past, claiming as in affinity with itself all in it that was true and good. It took

account of " whatsoever things are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, of good report ; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise " (Phil. iv. 8 R.V.). It is at once catholic in its sympathies and discriminative in its electicism. The elements of the virtuous character were recognised and honoured before the Christian era.[1] Christianity combined, harmonised and exalted them. The originality of the type of moral excellence introduced by it lies in its self-consistency and completeness, and above all in its embodiment of all moral truth in the person and character of its Founder. " The greatest contribution of Christ to moral theory was the life He led." [2] Irenaeus said that " He brought all that was new in bringing Himself."

In its varied applications of the principle of love, Christian Ethics gives prominence to the social aspects of virtue. Its supreme and inclusive end of the Kingdom of God is a social conception, while the personal virtues of the individual are such as constitute men members of that Kingdom, and conspire to its welfare and prevalence. The social aspect of the Ethical End is reflected in the characters of those who " seek first " the Kingdom, and regard its ideal fellowship as embracing their highest good. The universal love which Christianity proclaims as the Great principle of morality, alone can inaugurate

[1] " Conscience and Christ," p. 90.
[2] Streeter, " Reality," p. 206.

and secure a state of society from which wrong and unrighteousness would be excluded. It is the necessary condition of the realisation of the Kingdom of God. If with Professor Mackenzie[1] we were to define the Highest Good as "a perfectly ordered Universe apprehended and chosen as such," we could not conceive the attainment of such an Ideal in its social aspects apart from the universal rule of love.

Centuries before Christ, the social value of the moral virtues was a familiar theme in the ethical thought of Greece. In the time when the life of the Greek was lived in a free and autonomous city-State, those qualities of the citizens were naturally prized as estimable and virtuous which tended to the harmony and well-being of the civic community. Those habits of character accordingly, which were proved by experience to be necessary to the cohesion and prosperity of the State, obtained early recognition as foremost among the virtues. Before the time of Socrates, they were differentiated as Wisdom, Courage, Temperance, and Justice; and the bearing of each upon the welfare of the commonwealth is obvious. There can be no stable and prosperous community where the governors are destitute of prudence and sagacity, where courage, manhood, is not found to repel the dangers which may threaten it from without or from within, where each individual seeks without self-restraint his

[1] "Manual of Ethics," p. 260.

private pleasure and advantage regardless of the rights of others. Plato[1] pictures the good state as that in which the Wise govern, in which the courageous are in close alliance with them for its defence, and in which the operative and producing classes are in due subordination to those who exercise the ruling power, not for their own aggrandisement, but in the interest of all. Justice, according to him, is realised in the State, each of whose several classes devotes itself to its proper work, and performs its special function in the body politic; so that there is maintained in the State a true harmony and subordination under the rule of the wise, without which confusion and disaster must result. He arrived at the definition of those virtues which constitute the moral well-being of the individual, by an enumeration of those classes in the state which ought severally to be characterised by wisdom, courage, and temperance, and by justice or righteousness. These qualities must equally be present in the soul, that there may be soundness in the inner life. There, too, with the reasoning and governing principle there must be allied the "spirited" element, the generous emotions, which are on the side of reason, enforcing its behests upon the irrational instincts and cupidities of man's nature. Thus in Plato's view, virtue or righteousness consists in "the internal order, harmony and health of the soul," in which "the inward

[1] "Republic," Bk. IV.

faculties do severally their proper work."[1] Its four constituent elements were regarded as the chief contents of the moral life. The allegorical method of interpreting Scripture saw the mystical types of the Four Virtues in the Four Rivers whose source was in Eden and which watered the earth (Gen. ii. 11).

From the time of Ambrose and Augustine the four virtues which thus early attracted the attention of Grecian moralists have been known by the name of the "cardinal" virtues, in the Ethics of Christianity. It is, however, instructive to note how in their Christian setting, and when modified by Christian influences, they have acquired a deeper inwardness and import, a wider application, a greater wealth of ethical significance.[2] When taken over by Christianity, or as a recent writer says, "when baptized with the Christian Spirit," they have come to mean more than they meant in the ethics of Greece. Under the influence of the supreme principle of love to God and to man, they have been developed and extended, and transformed into some of the highest virtues of the Christian Character.

I. *Wisdom*, according to Plato, is the virtue of the governing element, whether in the State or in the

[1] "Republic," Bk. IV., 441.

[2] T. H. Green, "Prolegomena to Ethics," Bk. III., Chap. V. A. B. D. Alexander, "Christianity and Ethics," pp. 188 and foll.

individual life. The sphere of Wisdom as a Christian virtue is in the practical application of the moral Reason in the conduct of life. It discriminates the enduring interests of man's life from those of inferior worth. It is an ethical quality. As in the case of the other virtues, the supreme exemplification of it is found in the character, words and actions of Christ. It appears in the invariable sanity of His judgment in dealing with the facts of life and of conduct. His sagacity continually impressed and surprised those around Him. His insight into character astonished them. "He needed not that any one should bear witness concerning men; for He Himself knew what was in man." With an unerring moral discernment and tact He penetrates to the heart of the subject before Him. "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" Because of it His words carried conviction to the open-minded, and left those otherwise minded conscious of their inability to reply to Him. This power was due to what Matthew Arnold has called His "sweet reasonableness." His disciples "learned from observing Him and His example, much which, without perhaps any *conscious* process of being apprehended in its reason, was discerned instinctively to be true and essential, as soon as it was recommended in Christ's words and illustrated by Christ's example."[1] The wisdom of the Christian character is not the natural

[1] "Lit. and Dogma," p. 67.

endowment of an exceptional mental ability ; though as exhibited in Christ Himself, it reveals a mind of transcendent power. As a moral virtue, it can in individuals be cultivated by practice, like other virtues ; it is bestowed and increased by divine grace,[1] so as to attain in ever larger measure the ability to "discern the things that are excellent."

It is specially implied by Christ that the avoidance of those one-sided views of the Good (to which sometimes even well-meaning people are prone) is one of the functions of wisdom. He charges His generation with moral blindness, because it was unable to see the good in what was unconventional. It was repelled alike by the moral severity of the Baptist, and by what it reprobated as moral laxity in Himself. "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But," he says, "Wisdom is justified of her children." Wisdom appreciates the Good in its totality and comprehensiveness, and can see in it the harmony and consistency of qualities which to the undiscerning seem in conflict with each other. It is the faculty of appreciating life's true and highest values, and of knowing how to act in special circumstances so as to realise them. And thus in a world which is largely outside of the Kingdom and even hostile to it, wisdom is particularly requisite

[1] James i. 3.

in those who belong to it and are intrusted with its interests. "Be ye wise as serpents" (Matt. x. 16). It is tested in difficulties in conduct, through which it is given to it to descry the right path. It was to this deeper moral insight in His followers that Christ trusted, when He anticipated that His "hard sayings" would be understood by those for whom they were intended. "He that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me." "He that eateth this bread shall live forever." "If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death." "If any man cometh unto me and hateth not his Father and Mother and wife and children, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out. . . . If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off." It is as if He so expressed Himself in order to test and educate this very virtue in His hearers. Such highly-coloured language answered his purpose better than that which would have been capable of a literal interpretation. The hesitation occasioned by its seeming extravagance compels the attention of those who had been living under the dominion of the assumptions of a traditional morality. There have at all times been literalists who have missed the purport of such sayings by resting in the words without penetrating to the truth behind them. To suppose that Christ laid it down as a Christian duty literally to offer the other cheek, to be merely passive in the hands of the wrong-doer, would often amount

to courting the defeat of righteousness and setting a premium upon evil-doing. He did not passively submit to wrong-doing, when He made a scourge of cords and drove out of the Temple those who desecrated it, and poured out the changers' money and overthrew their tables (John ii. 15). Some of his utterances set before men aspects of the Moral Ideal which are far in advance of the present conditions of human life. But what may seem moral paradoxes in the present state of things are destined to become the moral commonplaces of the Kingdom, when it shall fully come. They anticipate the Kingdom in its full power and prevalence ; they would be indeed capable of a literal application in its new order when entirely realised. In a completely renovated Society, emancipated from wrong and oppression, all need for resistance to evil would be eliminated. Were the inner and outward righteousness universal, there would be no lust of the eye to be prevented by the destruction of the offending member, no circumstances in which a collision of private and domestic affection with loyalty to the highest and most-disinterested ends could occur (Luke xiv. 26). Inspired by Christ's words and example, the moral wisdom of Christianity contemplates the actual in the light of that which is to be, and views man's life and duty *sub specie aeternitatis*. To the Greeks in the earlier time the Hellenic State was held to embrace the whole social sphere and ethical environment of the individual citizen ; wisdom as a prac-

tical virtue, and as distinguished from a purely speculative or philosophic contemplation, found its highest application in devising prudent measures for the security and prosperity of the State. Christ exalts and transforms that civic wisdom of the Greek into the wisdom of the Kingdom of God, which extends its view over human life in its totality, and discerns life's values from the divine point of view. It is the wisdom which realises that a man is not profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul or "life." It is that which apprehends the superiority of the Spirit to the flesh, the greatness of the unseen beyond the seen, the reality of God. It is that which silences the adversaries by the finality of the rejoinder to "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's." It is that which alleges that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not the God of the dead but of the living, because those whose God He was, on whom He bestowed His love in their earthly life, must be still the living objects of the favour of Him whose gifts and calling are without repentance. The conviction that Christ's words thus raised the minds of His hearers to a level of insight unreached by others prompted the reply given by one of them to Christ's question whether they also would abandon Him; "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." That this Christian virtue of moral discernment is capable, like other virtues, of increase with the growth of the

"life" of which it is an element, and with the enlarging experience of time, is signified by that pregnant saying towards the close of His life, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John xvi. 12). The Christian apprehension of moral truth is thus progressive. Yet in all its stages it is raised above the level of mere opinion. In its degree it reflects the divine wisdom, and in its judgments discerns character and conduct in some measure as God sees them. To have this wisdom is to "have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16).

II. The virtue of *Courage* in various forms has been recognised by all races as an excellence of the character. As a feature of the Christian character, it means more than it meant for the Greek or the Roman. Plato defines it as "the power to hold fast continually the right and lawful opinion concerning things to be feared and things not to be feared."[1] It is that quality which enables one to overcome fear in a cause recognised to be so worthy as to merit on its behalf the endurance of pain, or the facing of death itself. The greater the evil unflinchingly confronted on such an occasion, the more admirable the courage of him who dares. The typical Greek form of this virtue was the military valour that braved wounds and death in battle for

[1] "Rep.," IV., 430.

the safety of the State. It received unstinted honour whether in victory or in defeat, as a principle of conduct in the good citizen which was a necessary condition of the preservation of the community.

The Courage that takes rank as a lofty Christian virtue finds its sphere in many scenes of life where its exercise is called for in circumstances widely different from those of the field of battle. War and its accompaniments have indeed been condemned by some of the representatives of the Church, e.g. Clement of Alexandria and Origen. In early times there was a widely felt aversion to participation in war by Christians. The unrighteous pretexts for many of the wars of those times, and also the idolatrous practices associated with the discipline of the Legions, led to the opinion that the soldier's life was incompatible with a Christian profession. Yet it does not appear that the Church ever spoke with an undivided voice in this sense. If some Christians refused to serve as soldiers on conscientious grounds, others were enrolled in the legions, and were not excluded from the Church in consequence. We recall the legend of the Thundering Legion in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, and the tradition of the early introduction of Christianity into Britain by the Roman invaders. There has indeed in all times been a certain amount of pacifism alleging religious scruples as to war of any kind. If all war is evil, a breach of the moral order, it would follow

that no one has a right on any pretext to engage in it. The bravery of the soldier from such a standpoint, would be but a survival of primitive combativeness, and of an instinctive pugnacity destined to be wholly eliminated in the upward progress of humanity. It is certain that when "that which is perfect is come," the need for the military type of valour will no longer exist; war will be abolished in a perfect state of society, when "the former things shall have passed away." Yet the mind of the pacifist has never been that of Christendom as a whole; as a general rule Christian sentiment has approved of engaging in war in certain circumstances, and has honoured the valour which has supported by arms a righteous cause. Frequently the call to arms has been made in the name of all that is held most sacred by men. It has been held that the resort to armed hostility is justified by the righteousness of the cause in which it is made.

A question of much historical interest arises as to whether the Crusades can be sanctioned on Christian and ethical grounds. They had the approbation of the Church, and of the Christian sentiment of the times. They enlisted the fervid support, not merely of the fanatic Peter, but of such men as St. Bernard and St. Louis. They received the benediction of a succession of Popes, in the name of the divine Head of the Church. They appealed not merely to the spirit of adventure, to the ambition of individual leaders, and to the love of license and

spoil, but also to the religious feelings of the genuinely devout. There is sympathy with the conscientious compulsion men felt to obey the call to deliver the scenes of the Nativity and the Crucifixion from the tyranny of the Saracens. Yet it seems equally certain that if in a more enlightened age a like call in similar circumstances were addressed to the conscience of Christendom, it would not be responded to in the manner and by the methods of the twelfth century. The religious spirit so displayed was too much associated with the belief which, under later conditions of warfare, held that "powder burned against the infidel was sweet incense to the Lord." [1] The Crusades were an expression of the spirit of their age; that the assumption of the white cross was regarded as the badge of fidelity to the Christian cause, is evidence that since then an advance has been made in the knowledge of what the Christian Ideal implies. The Christian Conscience, while not repudiating the enthusiasm of the Crusaders, or the romantic heroism of the days of chivalry, has now reached a higher level than that at which those types of valour appealed to it as the highest forms of Christian courage.

It is to be observed that in the New Testament no disapprobation is expressed of the military calling, or of the qualities required for the discharge of its duties. John the Baptist is not said to have

[1] "Cloister Life of Charles V.," p. 164.

denounced the vocation of the soldiers who resorted to him, but its abuses, specially enjoining them "to be content with their wages," which he is not said to have branded as the wages of iniquity. Christ's attitude towards those soldiers personally who crossed His path was not one of condemnation. It was to the entreaty of a Roman legionary that, according to St. Matthew, He responded, immediately after His descent from the mount of the Beatitudes. Regarding the centurion He said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." The warning that "they who take the sword will perish with the sword" was meant to repress a zeal which resorted to physical force at a great crisis in His career, and sought to inflict physical injury on those opposed to the Truth. The impotence of mere force to vindicate the truth and to destroy error has been often demonstrated. The period of the seventeenth century in this country, when violence was met with retaliation, entailed unhappy consequences and perpetuated divisions in the religious life of this country which have been long in healing. Yet in the relations of nations it would be the general verdict of the Christian conscience that circumstances arise when an appeal to the sword is justified against the oppression of the manifest aggressor. When on the one side there is the lust of material aggrandisement, and on the other a purpose of self-defence and protection of the weak, a recourse to armed resistance to wrong on the part of the latter in the absence of other

resource, is a stern yet sacred duty. The brave soldier, equally with the upright magistrate, bears the sword, not in vain, but as the minister of God, and even as an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil (Rom. xiii. 4). Both are appointed in their respective spheres to repress the lawless and wrong-doer, to protect the innocent, and to defend the cause of Justice.[1]

While the ethics of Christianity does not pass an indiscriminating condemnation on all resort to arms, it at the same time denounces those who make aggressive war, for gain, or for political reasons, as criminals who have incurred an unspeakable guilt. The Kingdom of God, which is the Social Ideal, is the reign of righteousness and of peace. While at present a universal disarmament is retarded by the low moral condition of the greater part of mankind, a truly Christian aim inspires the League of Nations and those International Treaties, whose purpose is to " outlaw " war, rendering it impossible by casting the combined weight of the law-abiding into the scale against the peace-breaker. The disasters of war incurred both by aggressor and defender, both by victor and vanquished, entail bloodshed and waste of the means of well-being on both sides, and above all the destruction of those lives which are the hope of the future. The alleged *necessity* of occasional

[1] Christians " may lawfully, now, under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions." " Conf. of Faith," Chap. XXIII., 2.

wars as a school of manhood and heroism is denied by Christianity and refuted by experience. The late Walter Bagehot has said, " Somehow or other civilization does not make men effeminate or unwarlike now as it once did." [1] The statement was verified in the Great War, when from the commercial and industrial centres of population multitudes went to the battle fronts, and did not there shrink from hardship and death in their country's cause.

In the ancient world the courage of the soldier was generally viewed as the typical form of the virtue.[2] Yet there was not wanting a perception of other ways in which it displayed itself, and Christianity has carried this tendency much further. The Fortitude, which is prepared to incur risks and to suffer without complaint in a worthy cause, is as requisite for the progress and prosperity of society in time of peace as in war. Thus the virtue which in its original form is largely dependent on man's physical organisation has been imbued by the spirit of Christianity with a new significance and undergone an ethical transfiguration. The history of Christian enterprise records innumerable achievements in which courage has been displayed in a spirit that imparts to it a moral value beyond what it possessed as it was generally admired in pagan antiquity. Christianity has elevated its quality and enlarged its scope through the disclosure of motives

[1] Quoted by Prof. Sorley, " The Moral Life," p. 60.

[2] Plato, " Rep." IV., 429 ; Aristotle, " Nic. Eth." III., 6.

and ends not always recognised to be of a heroic character. It has given special honour to the courage revealed in superiority to the ridicule and opposition which are often the lot of those who range themselves on the side of unpopular truths. Moral fortitude is the quality ascribed to those who thus take their stand upon principle, undeterred by the disabilities incurred by those who in adversity, yet in faith, support the cause which ultimately prevails.[1] It has often been signally displayed. Probably in every Christian community there are not a few instances of the courage which does not shrink from labour or loss or personal danger, in the unspectacular effort to relieve suffering, or otherwise to promote the true interests of mankind. It is enlisted in the service of those enlarged views of social duty which the Ethics of Christianity have with growing enlightenment inculcated. Prof. T. H. Green in a well-known passage of the "Prolegomena" says, "If a 'christian worker' who devotes himself, unnoticed and unrewarded, at the risk of life and at the sacrifice of every pleasure, but that of his work, to the service of the sick, the ignorant and the debased, were told that his ideal of virtue was in principle the same as that of the *andreios*, the 'brave man' described by Aristotle, and if he

[1] Seneca attributes to Socrates, as the motive why he did not escape from prison, the purpose of setting men free by his example, "from the fear of two most grievous things, death and imprisonment" ("Epistles," xxiv.).

were induced to read the description, he would probably seem to himself to find nothing of his ideal in it. Yet the statement would be true. The principle of self-devotion for a worthy end in resistance to pain and fear is the same in both cases." [1]

Christianity in proclaiming love to God and to man as the great principle of moral conduct makes it an unconditional duty to seek the good of others, even of the unthankful and the evil,—to seek it in face of the hostility of those interested in the maintenance of abuses, and even of opposition on the part of those who are to benefit by the service rendered. When love to God and to men is recognised as the highest principle of action, not only is the virtue of courage " touched by it to finer issues," but the ways in which it influences men's conduct, and the calls to which it responds, are indefinitely multiplied. As Courage rises in moral significance in proportion to the worthiness of the object in aiming at which the fear of pain is overcome, it reaches its highest level in the pursuit of the loftiest ends. The fortitude of Christ as typical of the self-sacrificing courage displayed in the martyrdoms whose heroism has dignified human nature, has profoundly impressed the Christian conscience as an unique instance of endurance of pain and despising of shame in the accomplishment of His purpose.

[1] " Prolegomena to Ethics," p. 304; Mackenzie, " Manual of Ethics," Bk. III., Chap. VII.; Muirhead, " Elements of Ethics," p. 215.

That the courage of the philanthropist, of the prophet, and of the pioneer, encountering danger and submitting to sacrifice for the good of others, is generally recognised as surpassing in moral value the valour of the battlefield is chiefly due to the teaching and example of Christ, and to the enlarged views of the Good and of man's duty to man, with which Christianity has enriched man's moral life.

III. Another of the cardinal virtues in the accepted scheme is *Temperance.* It means all that is implied in self-control, when the trial comes not from the fear of pain, but from the desire of pleasure. Plato says, " Temperance is a kind of order and mastery, as men say, over certain pleasures and desires." [1] Again, " Temperance is that unanimity which we described as a concord between the naturally better element and the naturally worse, as to which of the two has the right to govern." Equally with the other virtues beside which it stands, its prevalence is a condition of social well-being. A society whose members were governed by unregulated passions and desires would be doomed to internal disintegration, and would fall an easy prey to external foes. Courage in the Greek sense was usually connected with actions performed on behalf of a good that was common to many, such as the safety of the civic community. Similarly it was expected in the citizen that he should restrain his personal desires in so far as their gratification would interfere with the general

[1] " Rep.," IV, 430.

welfare. This self-control applied specially, according to Aristotle, to moderation in eating and drinking and to the sexual instinct. No man was good who neglected his duties to the state for the sake of gluttonous or drunken or other sensual indulgence. In addition to the repugnance to sexual vice as "unseemly," "unfitting," in the more refined minds of the community, it does not appear that in the earlier Greek morality any decisive reason could be alleged in favour of chastity as an essential of the moral life, as a universal duty, save as regards those forms of its infringement which caused rupture and confusion in the relations of the citizens.[1] Towards the slave population within, and towards "barbarians" without, who were not regarded as possessing the rights of citizens, a strictly chaste behaviour was not recognised as rigorously obligatory, or departure from it as criminal. The distinction between Christian and pagan moral sentiment is nowhere more pronounced than in the attitude to purity in the relations of the sexes.[2] While the deficiencies in the practice of Christendom have been deplorable, Christianity has from the beginning given a lofty place among the virtues to chastity. The tendency has been to make it the test of character, and to refuse to accord a high moral merit to the character of those who, whatever other excellence they possess, do not honour it by a scrupulous practice.

[1] "Proleg. to Ethics," Bk. III., Ch. V., p. 311 and foll.
[2] 1 Cor. vi. 9-20.

Christian self-control[1] is the Greek virtue of Temperance enlarged and deepened both in its social and individual reference. In the Ethics of Christianity, the world of mankind is the sphere for its practice. At the same time, owing to the essential inwardness of Christian morality, self-control is regarded as essential to the integrity of the individual self (1 Cor. vi. 18). Plato indeed had taught that intemperance involved the disintegration of the nature through the undue influence allowed to its irrational elements. Its consequences were so far recognised as evil not only for the community but for the individual. Christianity is more explicit on this point, and it further elevates and enlarges the meaning of the virtue by the new and higher motives with which it inspires it. The principle of Christian Temperance is the denial of some one aspect of the self for the sake of the higher good of the whole self. The higher gain that is sought consists in the realisation of the permanent and true self, and also in the furtherance of the social End of the highest life of others.[2] It is a readiness to sacrifice objects of desire which are inconsistent with true well-being. It requires abstinence from all forms of conduct which would degrade personality in oneself or others, from whatever would make humanity in oneself or another an instrument of pleasure instead of an end in itself. The denial of the temporary impulse is in the interests of the entire life.

[1] ἐγκράτεια [2] "Ethical Principles," p. 242.

An ascetic element of self-denial thus has an essential part in the formation of the Christian character. There is for all the call for sacrifice and renunciation as a condition of "entering into life" and continuing therein. Hence Professor James proposes,[1] as a practical maxim, "to be systematically ascetic or heroic in little, unnecessary points, to do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it." This is recommended as a means of strengthening "the faculty of effort," a training in concentration of will and the exercise of self-control, a preparation for facing those more serious moral exigencies which occur in every life. It is self-denial with a practical object.[2]

On the other hand, an Ascetism which tends to make a positive merit of self-appointed sufferings and of eccentric and unnecessary kinds of renunciation, is not in accordance with the Spirit of Christianity and the example of its Founder. In

[1] W. James, "Principles of Psychology," Vol. I., p. 126.

[2] A similar sentiment occurs in Seneca, "Ep. XVIII.": "It is just in the time of freedom from care that the soul should prepare itself for occasions of greater stress, and while circumstances are favourable, should strengthen itself against the times when fortune is adverse. In days of peace the soldier practices manœuvres, forms a rampart, though there is no enemy, and fatigues himself with gratuitous labour, that he may be equal to his task when it is necessary. If you would not have one fail when the crisis comes, exercise him to meet it before it comes."

its extreme form it assumes that all human pleasure is dangerous and a snare. Consciously or unconsciously it is associated with the tenet that matter is inherently evil, and that the physical side of man's nature is radically impure. Hence the belief that self-torment, mortification of the physical life in every form, is necessary to a superior virtue. Hence also the notion that the life in which there is most denial of all natural inclinations, the life of the recluse in the bare cell, and of the anchorite in the desert retreat, is a life of higher excellence than that lived in the performance of the reciprocal duties and services of human society.

The Christian principle is that nothing which God has made or ordained is evil in its true use and function. It becomes so when it is abused so as to prove an obstacle to the life of the true self and of the Kingdom. The Christ-life, which is the individual end, is the life in which those elements of man's nature in which he is akin to God, hold permanent sway. The more undisputed that sway becomes, the nearer does the character approach to that of the great Exemplar. This involves the strict limitation of every tendency to the place it occupied in the intention of God. The lower self of mere unregulated nature forms the individuality of one who, in the words of St. Paul, is "carnally minded"; and "to be carnally minded is death." When any element of the nature refuses to be subdued, it is to be sacrificed in the interests of the ordered whole.

In the warfare of the spirit with the flesh, " the body of sin must be destroyed " (Rom. vi. 6). The object of the moral conflict must ever be to annul whatever in the individual is alien to that true self which is the Christ-self in man. " If thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out ; or if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off." In saving his life in the lower sense, man loses his life in its totality, while he who parts with the lower, wins thereby the life which is life indeed. It has been said that " to live in the sense of the larger values attaching to our desires and deeds is to be possessed of the virtue of Temperance." [1] In its full Christian sense it is to practise the profound aphorism that " man must die to live." The virtue of Temperance as understood in the earlier secular morality, is thus transformed into Christian self-control, which abstains from all forms of evil ; into Christian self-denial in the highest interests of the individual moral life ; into Christian self-sacrifice for the sake of others and of the Kingdom of God. In its higher aspects it applies to those cases of conduct referred to by St. Paul, in which the individual recognises a call voluntarily to desist even from actions right in themselves, but liable to become an occasion of temptation and a stumbling-block in the way of others, whose moral convictions are less mature, and whose conscience being " weak," is apt to be perplexed and misled. " Let every one of us please his neighbour

[1] " Ethics," by Dewey and Tufts, p. 408.

for that which is good, unto edifying; for Christ also pleased not himself" (Rom. xv. 2). The pleasure or gain which is in itself lawful is sacrificed at the prompting of Christian love, when it tends to introduce dissonance and offence into the life of the Kingdom, and interferes with its unity and progress. The merit of such self-denial and self-sacrifice is measured, not by the amount of pain voluntarily endured or of pleasure renounced, but by the degree in which they subserve the cause of righteousness, promote the ethical End, and are of practical value for the Kingdom of God.

IV. The last of the four Cardinal Virtues is *Justice* or *Righteousness*.[1] It consists, according to Plato, in "The harmonious and regulated activity of all the elements of the inner life." In the righteous or just man, the governing reason, the emotions, impulses, desires, are maintained in due order and gradation, "set in tune together as if they were the chords of a harmony," so that his nature is a "real unity."[2] He is righteous in whom each faculty and principle keeps its own place in the character, and performs its own function, without usurping a part which does not belong to it, in whom "the powers of the soul are so constituted that they shall master and be mastered by one another in accordance with their nature."[3] The desires and impulses are

[1] "Uprightness" (Sidgwick, "Hist. of Ethics," p. 44).
[2] "Rep.," IV., 443. [3] *Ibid.*, 444.

obedient to the rule of the " wise " or rational part, and so the whole exists in a state of unison, equilibrium and health. Righteousness of Justice in the Grecian view of it, is the supreme and inclusive virtue, " summing up all virtues in itself." [1]

To those who recognise the highest morality in that ethic which Christianity has inculcated, these words of the Grecian moralists seem prophetic. The Christian Ideal of " Righteousness " is the sum of all the Christian virtues as these were exemplified in the character of Christ. In that Life all elements of the inward righteousness, which is " life," are combined in a harmonious unity.

It is the more necessary to take cognisance of this comprehensiveness and completeness of the Christian moral aim, because of the imperfect representations which have frequently been given of it. Erroneous views have been entertained regarding it, through overlooking some of its aspects and exaggerating others. Thus it has been described as negative, a cult of innocence and self-suppression, while its virile and militant aspects have been ignored. It has been charged with making the well-being of one's own soul its chief concern, while its social outlook has strangely been discounted. On the one hand, it has been alleged to be mercenary and prudential in its spirit, having as its motive a celestial reward rather than a disinterested love of goodness for its own sake. On

[1] Aristotle, " Nic. Eth.," V., 1, 15.

the other hand, it has been represented as pushing altruism and idealism to an impractical excess, demanding a self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of others which would be inconsistent with a man's duties to himself and fatal to the best interests of society. These and other mis-statements of its nature have been accompanied by distorted estimates of the character of its Founder. He has been conceived of as an impractical enthusiast, as a social revolutionary, as a visionary mystic, as "a young Galilean peasant in whom tenderness of heart was transformed into infinite sweetness, vague poetry, universal charm" (Renan). In such travesties of Christian morality and of its Founder's character, the true lineaments are grievously distorted of that Ideal which in an unique manner brings together those elements of moral excellence which modify and complete each other. It combines moral qualities which superficially appear to be opposed, but which in reality are complimentary. We are familiar in life with types of character which are lacking in this symmetry, strong in some good disposition, but wanting in its requisite qualification and counterpoise. Thus zeal is often untempered by discretion. Earnest loyalty to principle is not always found united with a charitable recognition of the conscientious convictions of others. Courage, as Plato says, must be accompanied with considerateness and gentleness, that it may not degenerate into roughness and barbarity. Liberality, Aristotle asserts, must be

balanced by prudence; carried beyond a certain point it merges into prodigality; while prudence in excess may issue in meanness and parsimony. Christian ethics has not adopted Aristotle's "doctrine of the mean" as a sufficient guide to the life of virtue.[1] It does not apply quantitative measures to moral goodness. It does not reach the right by avoiding two contrary extremes which are both wrong. Its method is positive, in bringing together contrasted qualities in a richer ethical unity. The virtues of the Christian character supplement each other and balance each other.[2] "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance endurance, and to endurance godliness, and to godliness love of the brethren, and to love of the brethren *love*" (2 Pet. i. 5). Insight, temperance, endurance, godliness have each its place in the Christian life, and exist not in isolation, but in organic union with each other. Very significant in this enumeration is its climax in universal Christian Love. Love of the Christian brethren is thus freed from all narrowness and exclusiveness when combined with love to all. The ethical Ideal of Christianity is characterised at once by its comprehensiveness, and by the balance and equipoise of its elements. In it is realised in an even higher degree than was contemplated by Plato, that harmonious activity and equilibrium of the

[1] "Nic. Ethics," Bk. II.

[2] See Barbour, "Philo. Study of Chr. Ethics," p. 36.

moral life in which he perceived that the Righteousness (Justice), or Uprightness, must consist, which is the health and well-being of the soul.

It is this aspect of the Ideal Life of the Gospel as manifesting a synthesis and balance of the virtues, which has been emphasised by those whose attempts to portray it have been most discerning and profound. With remarkable unanimity they have testified to the impression that the character of Christ makes, of combining to an unparalleled degree, the most diverse excellences in a perfect consistency.

Dean Liddon says, "There is a certain seeming impropriety in using that word 'character' with respect to Jesus Christ at all. For in modern language 'character' generally implies the predominance or absence of some side or sides of that great whole which we picture to ourselves in the background of each individual man as the true and complete ideal of human nature. . . . Character is that whereby the individual is marked off from the presumed standard or level of typical manhood. Yet the closest analysis of the actual Human Life of Jesus reveals a moral Portrait not only unlike any that men have witnessed before or since, but especially remarkable in that it presents an *equally balanced and entirely harmonious* representation of all the normal elements of our perfected moral nature."[1] Young says, "A single excellence un-

[1] "Divinity of Christ," p. 195.

usually developed, though in the neighbourhood of great faults, is instantly and universally attractive. *Perfect symmetry* on the other hand does not startle, and is hidden from common and casual observers. But it is this which belongs emphatically to the Christ of the Gospels."[1] Dorner says,[2] "All virtues attain their perfection only by unity and harmonious symphony, and this exists only when they all proceed from the totality and fullness of the one principle of virtue. This unity of His virtue, by means of which all His virtues are *harmoniously combined*, cannot be brought into full view without the concrete and the detail. But the main point is to view together the most distant elements which His moral character unites, and to show that one spirit harmoniously regulates and orders all." Luthardt says, "In the case of Jesus we are vividly impressed with the feeling that *perfect harmony* prevails in his mental life. . . . Jesus was in perfect harmony with Himself, because He was in perfect harmony with God." Dr. Schaff says, "He was free from all onesidedness, which constitutes the weakness as well as the strength of most eminent men. He was not a man of one idea, nor of one virtue, towering above all the rest. . . . Each was checked and completed by the op-

[1] "The Christ of History," p. 217.

[2] See "The Treasury of Religious Thought," ed. by Dean Spence, etc., Vol. V., Art. "Christ's Sinless Life," from which some of the following quotations are taken. The italics are ours.

posite grace. His character never lost its *even balance and happy equilibrium*, never needed modification or readjustment." Horace Bushnell says, "Men undertake to be spiritual and they become ascetic; or, endeavouring to hold a liberal view of the comforts and pleasures of society, they are soon buried in the world or slaves to its fashions. . . . The *balance of His character* is never disturbed or readjusted." Keim says, "A Galilean in the freshness and susceptibility of His sense of nature in all her forms, a Hebrew in his contemplative seriousness and in the depth of the power of his life with God. . . . Let us confess that humanity can elsewhere hardly exhibit the *even balance* of centrifugal and centripetal forces."[1] Holtzmann says, "The contrasts of tranquillity and enthusiasm in Jesus attached his followers to him; and the *union of those opposite qualities* was not the least part of the secret of His first results."[2]

The words and comportment of Christ, as known to us, are seen to be the outcome of this balanced symmetry of mind and character which has been so generally recognised,—this harmony and equipoise disturbed by nothing out of proportion, nothing in contradiction, with the whole tenor of His life. In Him manhood in its strength is combined

[1] "History of Jesus of Nazareth."

[2] "War Jesus Ekstatiken?" 1903, p. 139, quoted by Peabody in "Jesus Christ and the Christian Character," p. 51.

with the tenderness and purity of the most refined womanhood. The strength of the pillar is adorned with the beauty of lily-work. Plato's vision of the inner order and balance of the righteous soul is more than fulfilled in the character and life of the Christian Ideal in Christ. The ethical categories, which in Plato's view included the essentials of the moral life, are transformed in the light of that Ideal into Christian virtues, which at once include and transcend all that they meant in the morality of paganism. They have become, in the Ethics of Christianity, forms and applications of that supreme principle of universal love asserted in the two great commandments. Revitalised by that spirit, the cardinal virtues have received a loftier import and a wider scope. Wisdom becomes insight into the true moral values of life. Courage is elevated into Christian devotion and heroism. Temperance is transformed into Christian renunciation of the partial self in the interests of the whole self, and into sacrifice of self for the sake of others. The Righteousness which was seen to make for men's individual and social benefit as citizens of the earthly state, becomes transfigured into the Righteousness of the Kingdom of God.

VI.

THE CHRISTIAN DYNAMIC AND MOTIVE.

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Ethics is usually distinguished from the sciences of Nature, by being classed as a normative science. Its main concern is not with the description and explanation of facts as they actually occur in their sequence or co-existence, but with the End or Ideal, with that which *ought* to be. Ethics as a science fulfils its chief object, in defining, so far as possible, the Good, the ultimate end of man's purposes and actions, that which is for him the standard of character and conduct. Thus most writers treat it as a speculative science, that which teaches men to *know* the Good. When the Good is defined by it, it can further proceed to enumerate those qualities of character and types of conduct which are seen to be virtues and duties, as being in harmony with, and aiming at, the Good. The inquiry is conducted in a scientific and speculative spirit, and is treated as a branch of knowledge. It is not the immediate object of scientific ethics, as such, to reform men's characters, but to ascertain what is the Right or the Good. As Professor McKenzie says, " It discusses the ideal of

goodness or rightness, and is not directly concerned with the means by which this ideal may be realised. Ethics, though a normative science is not to be regarded as a practical science." [1]

On the other hand, the essentially religious and practical nature of Christian ethics is shown by the constant insistence in Christianity on the necessity of "the new life." It not only sets forth the Ideal Good as an object of knowledge, but regards mere knowledge as ineffectual and barren, until man is brought into contact with the source of the moral energy without which its object cannot be attained or even approached. The Christ to whom it points is not a mere memory of departed goodness, but a living Power.

Christianity sets before men, as the personal End and Ideal, the character and life that are realised in Christ. That end is accomplished in any individual in proportion as the moral forces and influences, which are unveiled and invoked by Christianity and mediated through Christ, are efficacious in producing in him that righteousness in which his true "life" consists. The virtues and duties of the Christian life being the special applications of the principle of love to God and man, these virtues and duties are viewed as evidence of that change in the state of the inner life, which establishes the active rule within it of this universal love of which for Christianity

[1] "Manual of Ethics," p. 10.

Christ is the incarnation and example. Professor Paterson says,[1] " Christianity made itself so entirely responsible for morality, that it has been possible to overlook the fact that it is fundamentally a system of redemption, and to think that its sole purpose is to give good advice in the matter of conduct." Its concern is with the inward renovation of man's life. The purport of the Christian Gospel is the salvation of the soul. The virtues and conduct indissolubly associated with its beliefs are " the things that accompany this salvation," its practical result in the life that is " right with God." The evangelical propagandism which has characterised Christianity as a religion, and has been often prosecuted with heroic effort and self-sacrifice, has not derived its main inspiration from the desire of promoting outward morality in men's relations with each other, salutory and important as such a moral reformation is. It has been sustained in the pursuance of its world-wide enterprise by the belief that through the Christian Faith forces and influences become operative in human nature, which can bring it into inward accord with God and His righteousness, and can thus effect a vital revolution and spiritual renovation in the character of those who accept it and enter upon its Way of Life.

Mill in his well-known Essay on the " Utility of Religion " discusses the adequacy of outward Authority, Education, and the compulsion of public opin-

[1] " Gifford Lectures," p. 413.

ion, apart from Religion, to make men lead moral lives. This is to view the subject from the outside. The question to be asked is whether these influences can of themselves change men's natures at the source and core. Elsewhere,[1] while expressing his dissent from the system of politics and morals in Comte's "Système de Politique Positive," he holds that that treatise has "abundantly shown the possibility of giving to the service of humanity, even without the aid of belief in Providence, both the physical power and social efficacy of a religion; making it take hold of human life, and colour all thought and feeling and action, in a manner of which the greatest ascendancy ever exercised by any religion, may be but a type and foretaste." Mill considers that a love of humanity, apart from the higher aid disclosed by religion, may lead to an abstinence from all that would wrong another, and make men "feel the same absolute obligation towards the universal good" that a fervent patriotism displays in respect to the safety and welfare of one's own country. But such a cosmopolitanism as a substitute for religion and the spiritual forces to which it gives access, has never proved its sufficiency as a guarantee of morality; the love of mankind which has been most practically effective is that which is associated in a religious spirit with the love of God. It is true that right and disinterested lives are lived by many who have discarded or ignored belief in the super-

[1] "Utilitarianism," p. 49.

natural. Such conduct on their part is often inspired by the conviction that moral rectitude and active beneficence are most congruous with man's true nature, and secure for him most real and permanent satisfaction on the whole. They act upon the principle to which F. W. Robertson gave expression—"Whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain; If there be no God and no future state, yet even then it is better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than to be false, better to be brave than to be a coward." However it may be with individual and exceptional instances, it has never been proved that on such terms an elevated morality, not to speak of the higher Christian virtues, would retain a permanent control over the minds and the practice of men generally. It would seem as if the sense of the presence of a supreme objective Righteousness in the Universe, which is active in human nature and in the world, is necessary to give morality its "magisterial authority" in human life.

It is irrelevant to reply that the ages of faith were not times of unblemished virtue and rectitude. Men's practice has always come short of their beliefs and principles. Even in an age when conviction and enthusiasm were in their pristine vigour, the Christian community was disturbed by grave internal misdemeanours. The exhortations of New Testament writers against such evils as slander, drunkenness, evil communications, showed that these were faults against which it was not superfluous to warn

even those who were "called to be saints." Yet it is certain that where there is the background of a religious faith that is wholly in favour of righteousness, and the conscious presence of a Power which can be experienced by man as making for righteousness, morality has a prestige, and authoritativeness with which no merely prudential or purely rational sanctions invest it. At times and in communities in which materialism has prevailed, there have been a lowering of the moral standard, and an impaired sense of the obligatoriness of such elementary virtues as temperance, chastity, veracity and honesty; and this decline has been reflected in the general practice. The relaxation of moral restraints in the age of the Renaissance, the condition of certain classes of society in England after the Restoration, and in France in the period of the Encyclopædists, and on the other hand the moral effect of Puritanism, when it has been a vital religious force in this country and America, show how close is the connection between faith and practice. As regards the distinctively Christian type of morality, in its purity and elevation, the experience of the past gives no encouragement to expect that it can maintain itself as an active and increasingly influential Ideal without the support of the Religion of which it is the practical issue. When deprived of that support, it does not appear that its exacting ethical standard can prevail against the moral inertia of average human

nature, or that it can continue to provide a moral objective which men would regard as having practical significance for them, as that at which they ought seriously to aim, and for which other things should be sacrificed. The loftiness and purity of the Christian Ethic could not indeed be wholly forgotten, as though the vision and never been seen of the type of character and conduct by which it has been illustrated in those lives which have come nearest to its standard of righteousness, and above all in the life and character of Christ. The danger is that apart from those spiritual influences which are mediated through the Christ of Christian faith, it would be treated merely as an impracticable Ideal, the dream of an unattainable perfection, one of those potent enthusiasms of the past which have blinded men to the actual facts and possibilities of life, and have had their day.

The secular moralists, who have expounded with earnestness and eloquence the content of the Good, the Right, Man's duty, are less successful in showing, even when they have attempted it, how their ideals can be translated into general practice and become efficacious in human life. They have not bridged the chasm between the theory of the ethical life and the moral regeneration of the individual. Their failure to do so is commented on by Bacon. He says,[1] " The writers upon this science appear like writing-masters, who lay before their scholars a

[1] " Advancement of Learning," Bk. 7, Chap. 1.

number of beautiful copies, but give them no directions how to guide their pen or shape their letters; for so the writers upon ethics have given us shining draughts, descriptions and exact images of goodness, virtue, duties, happiness, etc., as the true objects and scope of the human will and desire; but for obtaining these excellent and well-described ends, or *by what means the mind may be broke and fashioned* for obtaining them, they either touch this subject not at all, or slightly." In the same spirit and with equal truth the Author of "Ecce Homo" remarks, "Philosophy undertakes to explain what it is right to do, while Christianity undertakes to make men disposed to do it." Christianity, under no illusion as to the unruly and chaotic condition of the human nature with which it deals, commits itself to effect the readjustment and renovation of man's life in accordance with the mind and life of Christ, in whom it sees the Moral Ideal realised. It claims not only to impart the knowledge of the Good, but also to make known the method and forces by which human nature can be brought to the possession of that true "life," the full and "abundant life," which has been mediated by Christ. It has been truly said that "Christianity raises our moral standards, while it offers to all who accept them the power to attain the splendour of humanity's ideal."[1] It cannot be disputed that Christianity has brought influences to bear

[1] "Life's True Values," p. 54 (Selected Essays from "The Times").

upon men's lives which have proved more widely effective in their ethical results than the most celebrated secular systems of Greece or of modern times. It has had this success, not merely among the élite of the race, where the conditions might appear to be favourable, but among persons of all moral grades and surroundings, even the lowest and least promising. Many other systems have no certain word to say even as to whether the complete moral conversion from a degraded to a virtuous type of character is possible. Some would regard man's moral improvement as strictly limited by his hereditary dispositions and by those elements in his environment over which he has no control. The view of Aristotle was "that the unjust or the profligate was free at the beginning not to acquire this character, and therefore he is voluntarily unjust or profligate; but now that he has acquired it, he is no longer free to put it off." [1] He has forged the fetters which bind him, and for such the Greek Philosopher had no assurance of deliverance. In marked contrast with this is the attitude of Christianity to the morally deranged. The publicans and sinners, and the Magdalene, were the objects of Christ's hopeful solicitude. From among such have come those who have been the most signal instances of a moral transformation. So it has ever been to a greater or less extent, wherever Christianity has had the oppor-

[1] "Nic. Eth.," III., 15, 14.

tunity of revealing the ethical resources which it discloses and makes effectual.

Butler views man's moral constitution as an ordered polity of impulses, propensities, appetites, and principles of action, some tending to the good of self and some to the good of others. These have not all the same right, in the economy of his nature, to rule in his life. There is a natural order and subordination among them. Over all is the moral faculty, to which belongs the double property of judging acts to be right or wrong, and also of determining itself to be the supreme guide of life, "in contradistinction from all other faculties, or natural principles of action."[1] In this sense it is man's virtue and duty to live and act "according to nature," to his true nature. Regarding this moral faculty or conscience he says that "if it had strength as it has right, if it had power as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world."[2] It has always been asserted on behalf of Christianity as an ethical religion that through it a way is opened for the action of forces in man's life, by which "Christ is formed in him" (Gal. iv. 19), which confirm in him the authority and rule of that principle which is the "voice of God" in him, investing it with that power which Butler claims for it. Kant believed in the sufficiency of the Practical Reason,

[1] See Butler, "Dissertation on Virtue," note.
[2] Butler, Sermon II.

together with reverence for the majesty of the Moral Law, which humbles man's pride,—the only motive of an emotional kind whose moral worth he admitted. In Butler the appeal is to reason, which can convince man that the life lived in obedience to conscience is the only life in accordance with the constitution and facts of man's nature, rightly interpreted, and therefore the life which all reasonable persons should live. The aim of Christianity is to effect a moral change in man's nature by which he is both disposed and enabled to live the life of which Christ is the Exponent and the Ideal.

The Divine Spirit, God in action, is represented (Gen. i.) not merely as creative, but as bringing order into the primeval chaos of physical nature. In Christianity an effect of an analogous kind in the moral nature of man is attributed to the Spirit of grace, which is at once transcendent and immanent.[1] In man the disorderly elements, corresponding to the material chaos, exist as an unregulated aggregate of impulses, propensities, hereditary tendencies, acquired qualities and habits, and constitute his individuality in its disorganised and unformed state. Their anarchic condition is the negation of the true self or "life." It is requisite that he enter into "life," that he be "born from above," if he is to see the Kingdom of God. An inward change, a reorganisation, a new beginning in the self,[2] is necessary.

[1] See Lecture 1, p. 41 (Grace).
[2] 2 Cor. V, 17: Gal VI, 15.

When this change is effected by the only power which can originate it, the co-operation of the conscience and of the will is enlisted in the moral task. One cannot enter into the condition of true "life" without the action in him of the higher Power, nor can he without it make progress in the way towards the ethical end. All life has its source in God, and the highest 'life' is His noblest work. Christianity finds the vital ethical dynamic, apart from which other influences are ineffectual, in the action of the Divine Spirit in man; while at the same time, it is man's task to co-operate with his will in "working out his own salvation" and in "laying hold on 'eternal life'." The divine action in man is such as to assist and educate the moral personality.[1] Eucken says, "We may call the morality arising thence the ethics of the spiritual life; for the centre of life and its ruling motive lie in man's relation to a superior spiritual life which is at the root of his own being, and yet has to be acquired by his own deeds and efforts"; and again, "All deep thinkers have seen, in the grasp of the essence of life and the development of its possibilities by means of this individual capacity, not an achievement by man alone, but the manifestation of a higher power,—a gift of grace."[2] Whatever experiences and motives may be associated with the renovation and transformation of the

[1] See above, pp. 39, 40, 41.
[2] "Present Day Ethics," p. 69.

character, their permanent moral significance depends on their being the means through which the Divine Spirit acts in the life. They are efficacious because they are ways in which human nature is reached and moved by God, "who worketh all things in all" (1 Cor. xii. 6). It is man's part to yield himself to such influences, and to allow them to have their due weight with him in the choice of what his End in life shall be.

These co-operative experiences are so various, the nature of their appeal is affected so much by the circumstances of the individual, that no complete enumeration of them is possible. The means by which men are induced to break with what Eucken calls their "aimless past" are multiform. The gates of the City open towards the East and the West and the North and the South, and many paths lead men to it. The inner moral history of no two persons is the same. Yet under the conditions to which all human lives are subject, certain experiences calculated to make a deep moral impression upon men, are of general occurrence. They are means through which Divine grace acts, and tend to predispose men to such an interest in the Christian End or Ideal as may move their wills to make choice of it as their end.

Among such experiences may be instanced that sense of *disillusionment and dissatisfaction* with other and inferior ends, which is frequently felt and testified to, and which naturally impels those con-

scious of it to consider what is the true and adequate end of life. The pursuit of the ordinary objects of desire, such as wealth, material comfort, influence, reputation, can so elicit the energies as at times to distract the attention from a regard to what is of ultimate and absolute value in life. Continuous application of the mind to such objects of endeavour becomes through habit a second nature to many ; in the dedication of thought and of time to them, many find a kind of partial self-realisation. For some the amusements and pleasures of society form the main end of existence. The prizes of a political career appeal powerfully to ambition as well as to higher motives. Yet history and biography and the candid confessions of many, afford abundant evidence that such objects as these are incapable of yielding a constant and complete satisfaction, either in the pursuit or in the possession. A man does not realise his ' self ' in them, even when they are attained. Goethe's oft-quoted remark to Eckermann is in point, that his prosperous life had been nothing but toil and care, and that he had known very few days of genuine happiness. Others less favourably situated have not claimed the achievement of that which had eluded his grasp. The literature of the inner life and of self-revelation bears ample testimony to the hours of disillusionment which overtake even the apparently successful, when they ask themselves what it is all worth. The question is that with which Ignatius Loyola used to close his discussions with

his friend Xavier on the value of social distinction, influence, fame—"what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" In none of its forms does the cult of the external give scope for the realisation of the self, the "life." And this dissatisfaction, though not always effectual in fixing the choice elsewhere, implies that there are in those affected by it some presentiment, however vague and imperfect, of the moral Ideal, and the capacity, though latent, of experiencing the attractive power inherent in it.

An impression of the vanity of life *in the prospect of its inevitable close* is calculated to turn the thoughts towards an End which imparts a real and permanent value to it. The "Confessions" of Tolstoy disclose the profound despondency which the thought of the certainty of death made upon a man, who, judged by the common standards, possessed all the means of a full life. "Is it not senseless," he asks in "My Religion," "to labour at what, however much you try, can never be finished? Death will always come before the tower of your prosperity can be completed, and will triumph." He expresses his fear of life and dread of death in the tale of the traveller who seeks to escape from danger by descending a pit, but at the bottom sees a dragon waiting to destroy him. To save himself he clings to a twig, "but the white and black mice (day and night) gnawed at the branch by which I hung." Inexorable fate drew hourly nearer. The issue in his case

was an attempted deliverance through escape from the inane, conventional life of his own class into the natural and healthy existence of the laborious and religious peasantry. Many persons of a more normal temperament than that of Tolstoy are constrained by the approach of death to pronounce their life a failure so far as its main purpose is concerned. The question inevitably arises, however it may be answered, whether there is some end in life of a totally different kind from any aim merely temporal and empirical, and of a supremely worthy nature. The problem tends to become more insistent as life advances. The impulse towards a true self-realisation, however vaguely the consciousness of it may be present in many, is often thus stimulated by the manifest brevity and incompleteness of life. If not in things of relative and transient value, then in some other direction, it urges man to seek for satisfaction and fullness of life.

Another pre-disposing occasion of interest in the ethical end is the conviction, often forced upon one in the course of his life, of *the moral derangement of his inner self*, the sense that he is not "right with God." He conceives a dissatisfaction, not merely with the conditions of human life, and with the brevity of its span, but with himself, with what he is. It expresses itself not merely in the acknowledgment that he does wrong actions, but that he *is* wrong inwardly, being conscious of a nature at war within itself, spirit against flesh, sense against mind, pro-

pensity and desire against reason and conscience. As a physical organism experiences pain and disease when its constituent parts function discordantly, so the unity of the self is impaired, and it is conscious of something amiss, by reason of the lack of harmony in the elements which constitute its nature. Its moral health and happiness are destroyed when it is thus the arena of internecine strife. The distress occasioned by this inward distraction may become acute, as it is portrayed in Augustine's "Confessions," or in Bunyan's "Grace Abounding." Yet as in their case, it has frequently proved a state of transition, and the consciousness of this inward disruption has been fraught with important moral issues. The average Greek lived in a "universe"[1] of interests, motives, desires into which such disturbing self-communings seldom intruded. Hence the morality of the Greek never rose to such a height either of moral vision or of attainment as has been reached in Christianity. Christianity introduced a new Ideal and an element of introspection in men's judgments upon themselves which rendered a pagan self-complacency, rarely troubled by serious self-accusation, impossible to those who came under its influence. An intensified sense of this inner discord is a consequence of the fact that in Christianity the ethical aim and ideal so far transcend

[1] See McKenzie's "Manual," p. 47, for the meaning of the term "universe" so used.

the mundane virtue of Aristotle or even the Idealism of Plato. It has been alleged in favour of the moralities of Confucianism and Mohammedanism that their demands are such as to allow for human imperfections, and can be fulfilled with comparative facility by the average man. But in proportion as an ideal is easily attained, it has less moral elevation. The righteousness of the Kingdom, rising to " perfection's sacred height," surpasses man's actual achievement. By revealing man to himself in the light of what he ought to be, it destroys his self-satisfaction. By at once rebuking and attracting him, it tends to become an uplifting and regenerating power in his life.

The false unity of the lower life, and the emergence of that sense of discord which may prove the beginning of a vital ethical change, are described by St. Paul.[1] He refers to a stage antecedent to the recognition of the law of righteousness, which is the condition of those in whom a sense of sin does not interfere with the inner self-content of the nature which is morally unawakened. It is the state of a false inner harmony and unconsciousness of evil in one whose existence is wholly on the natural level. He is, as St. Paul says, " alive apart from the law." He is unaware of any discord and lack of conformity in himself, because he has as yet no vision of moral reality and of a true order with which he is at variance, and therefore no conscious need of

[1] Romans vii.

being inwardly in unison with it. But when he sees that vision, when he recognises that to which he has been blind, " when the commandment comes," then he can no longer remain ignorant of the falseness and abnormality of the life whose maxims he had taken for granted and whose nonconformity with the right had not previously troubled him. He " dies," realising that he has not the rightly ordered " life." He discovers that his inner life is not adjusted to the moral environment of which he has now become aware. The moral reality which is disclosed to him " through the commandment " occasions in him a paralysis and despair, and thus " the commandment which was unto life," he finds in that crisis of his ethical experience to be " unto death." The unity of his nature becomes consciously disrupted into diverse selves. Hence many of his actions " executed blindly with no proper concurrence of the will," [1] but at the impulse of tendencies which his higher self repudiates, are not acknowledged as truly his by that higher self. " That which I do I know not ; for not what I would, that do I practise ; but what I hate that I do " (Rom. vii. 15). The better self delights in the ideal of righteousness which it acknowledges as rightfully imposing its claim to obedience ; but through the strength of the lower self dominated by its rebellious elements, sin asserts its constraint upon

[1] Sanday and Headlam," Romans," p. 177.

the actions. Owing to the ready access of sin into his life through his physical organism and fleshy nature, he seems doomed to continue a captive in this condition of moral servitude. This experience of inward strife and derangement leads to the question who shall deliver him from *the body of this death?* Thus Paul tells how it was the occasion of his coming under the redeeming power of Christ, through whom and in whom the true unity of man's nature is restored.

The ethical significance of the experiences we have referred to is due to the fact of their conducing to Repentance, which Christ Himself proclaimed as the essential condition of entering into the "life," and the citizenship of the Kingdom of God. His call was (Matt. iv. 17) to repentance, "for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." His commission to the Twelve was to preach repentance. This repentance did not consist in a merely emotional regret and feeling of shame for the unworthy past. Nor was it to end in outward acts of self-inflicted penalty, as might be suggested by the Vulgate rendering of His summons ("Do penance," *poenitentiam agite*). The Repentance (*metanoia*, change of mind) required, implies a transition into another "universe" of thought and desire and will, a change in the inner life of thought and feeling and purpose, which marks the beginning of the process whose end is the realisation of the true life or self. Whether the transition is associated with a prolonged period of storm and

stress, as with Augustine and Bunyan, or is less emotional and laboured in its accompaniments, it is a crisis in which the old yields place to the new life. Repentance is the repudiation of the former self. If it is sincere, an inner change is already in process. It means that a man comes to have new views regarding life and its values, and at least an incipient recognition and appreciation of the type of person he ought to be. When it is permanent and effectual, it issues in a reformation of character, a new orientation of the life, and moral progress in the direction of the Ethical End.

Faith, hope and love were by the old Theologians called the Theological Virtues, as being divinely "instilled" into men, and as resting in God as their object. The Good is of the very nature and being of God. The right made known through conscience is the voice of God. The morality having this religious sanction is not only rationally obligatory upon men, but has all the authority which a divine command possesses. Its observance is obedience and service rendered to God. Without faith, God cannot be known; He cannot be apprehended as One who is always and absolutely good, and on the side of the good. Such a religious faith, in proportion to its sincerity, cannot fail to create moral earnestness and purpose. The obedience is not that given to an arbitrary command, but to the prerogative recognised as belonging to the absolutely Good. In Faith there is the element of venture in which

man commits himself to an Object beyond him and unseen. Christian Faith is the trustful self-surrender to God as to Him who is perfectly righteous and always wills what is perfectly Good. The immoral and the wrong are seen to be in opposition to the rectitude of the Universe, and to the very nature of things, being contrary to God's will. Christian Faith transforms every breach of morality into a crime against God's righteousness. In its view wrongs done to others are offences committed against Him; they are deliberate perversions of His will. "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned," (Ps. li. 4). It is obvious that morality when supported by such a sanction must possess a practical force, must exercise a constraint, which no prudential Hedonism or purely rational Idealism could exert. Especially would its superior power appear at times when men are subject to sudden and great temptation. In the case of one so tempted it need not be asked which motive would be most efficacious in enabling him to resist,—that to which he appeals when he says to himself, "If I do this, I am contravening the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and my own true interest on the whole"; or that which he experiences when he says, "If I do this, I am violating the impersonal reason that regulates all nature"; or that which he feels to be final, when he says, "How can I do this wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9). The

morality based on the Christian faith which centres in a God of infinite power and goodness brings a Power making for righteousness to bear upon men's lives. Alike the Christian type of goodness and the sense of the obligatoriness of that goodness, are the consequences of the Christian belief and experience of the Divine, which underlie the Christian ethic. The apprehension of God is an act of faith, and it opens an access into human nature for the influx of a moral energy which has not its source in man.

The *personal loyalty and devotion* which Christ has inspired have wielded an influence of supreme power in the moral life of men. It has been said that the most original element in Christian morality is the person of its Founder, and that His greatest contribution to ethics was His life. He did not merely speak of the Good, He lived it, and proved its reality by realising it in Himself. He is in Christian Ethics the concrete expression of the Moral Ideal. The Good as defined in many systems of secular ethics is an abstraction. The conception of it is framed by combining the virtues and excellences which in actual life are found apart, and raising them to their highest indices. Seneca indeed seeks in history for some actual person who could be revered as embodying them all. Quoting Epicurus, he gives it as his counsel that " we should make choice of some good man, and should always keep him before

our eyes, that so we may live as if under his observation, and do all things as if he saw us."[1] The models he suggests are Cato or Laelius, the former of whom ended his life by his own hand because Cæsar was victorious, while the amiable character of the latter is known to us mainly through the writings of Cicero. Seneca failed to find what he sought. It would be impossible for any secular theory to indicate even among its most revered exponents one who could be said to have "fulfilled all righteousness," and to whose moral control and example persons of every age and condition could subject themselves with entire loyalty and confidence.

Christianity points to Christ as One in whom its adherents recognise a perfect character, and in whom its opponents have been unable to prove moral default. It claims that its great Example appeals to all in human nature that can constrain man to yield an unqualified submission, both of mind and of heart, to what he sees and knows to be highest. The True, the

[1] Seneca, "Ep. XI." "Aliquis vir bonus nobis diligendus est ac semper ante oculos habendus, ut sic tanquam illo spectante vivamus, et omnia tanquam illo vidente faciamus. . . . Aliquem habeat animus quem vereatur, cuius auctoritate etiam secretum suum sanctius faciat. O felicem qui sic aliquem vereri potest, ut ad memoriam quoque eius se componat atque ordinet! . . . Elige itaque Catonem. Si hic tibi videtur nimis rigidus, elige remissioris animi virum Laelium. . . . Opus est, inquam, aliquo ad quem mores nostri se ipsi exigant; nisi ad regulam prava non corriges.

Beautiful and the Good have an inherent sovereignty, requiring no extrinsic support to make valid their title to the homage of those to whom it is given to appreciate them. When they become incarnate in an actual Person, reflected in His words and acts, revealing themselves in all that He was in Himself, and in His relations with others, their power over those who can discern them and are in sympathy with them, may well prove irresistible. He "has called us by His own glory and virtue" (2 Pet. i. 3). Coleridge says,[1] that "the true life of Christians is to eye Christ in every step of His life, not only as their rule, but as their strength." The influence of a life is immeasurably greater than that of a system. Precepts derive much of their weight from the character of him who utters them. Christ draws to Himself man's highest admiration and devotion; and with this love to the Good as manifest in Him, there mingles the sense of personal indebtedness to Him. Those in whose lives He has been the dominant power have invariably testified to the sense of what they personally owe to Him. His sufferings and the sacrifice of Himself were for them. The sense of their individual obligation to Him is not lost in the magnitude of His work for mankind. This combination of love and gratitude forms the strongest incentive, of which human nature is capable, to the imitation of Him in whom they centre,

[1] "Aph. on Spiritual Religion," No. XVI.

and to casting in one's lot with Him in purpose and action.

It is a principle in ethics that the end desired and aimed at constitutes the motive.[1] The End or Ideal, apprehended as the Supreme Good, the ultimate interest, is itself the motive to its realisation, that which moves the will to identify itself with it. In Christian Ethics the Ideal is held to be realised in the character and life of Christ, and the acceptance of Him as such has operated through the ages in effecting a moral regeneration in men's souls. We quote the well-known words of the historian of Rationalism, as those of one not likely to be guilty of emotional exaggeration :[2] "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love ; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions ; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice ; and has exercised so deep an influence, that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years has done more to regenerate and soften mankind, than all the disquisitions of the philosophers and all the exhortations of the moralists. This indeed has been

[1] Seth's "Principles of Ethics," p. 72 *seq.* Mackenzie, "Handbook," p. 64 *seq.* Muirhead, "Elements of Ethics," p. 60 *seq.*

[2] Lecky, "History of European Morals," Vol. II., p. 8.

the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life." "The Platonist exhorted men to imitate God; the Stoic, to follow reason; the Christian, to the love of Christ."

The Christian hope which anticipates the progress and final advent of the Kingdom as the *Social* End, has acted at all times as a powerful stimulus to Christian practice. The expectation in the early church of a speedy consummation of the age gave place to a sober sense of moral responsibility on the part of those who realised themselves to be "labourers together with God" (1 Cor. iii. 9), and "fellow-workers with the truth" (3 John viii) in this world. The enthusiasm of the earliest period settled down into the steadfast assurance that the moral task will not be in vain, whatever difficulties it may have to encounter. *Hope* accompanies the conviction of Faith in the supreme worth of the end, and anticipates its realisation. It is sustained by belief in the power of the Good to overcome what is contrary to it in the individual life and in the world,—by the Christian certainty that the forces making for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness are greater than all that are against them. It is the inspiration of the patience that can endure. "We are saved by hope," and "if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. viii. 24, 25). Christian Faith and Hope unite in giving vigour to the moral endeavour which consists in "forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forward to the things

which are before." The social End of the Kingdom, even though it be conceived in a vague and partial manner, acts as a morally constraining summons to those in sympathy with it to be in themselves worthy of its citizenship, and in their outward life and work to hasten its coming (2 Pet. iii. 12, R V. marg.). It proves its moral power as an incentive to love and good works, when men and women are ready to endure hardship and sacrifice " for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake." The coming of the Kingdom is marked, not only by its outward extension, but also by the increase in its members of that love to Christ which is creative in them of the type of character and life He has originated. The Christian Church by its witness to Christ fulfils its mission in the measure in which it sets Him forth as supremely worthy of that devotion and loyalty.

If such is the nature of the attractive power inherent in the Christian End and of the motive constituted by it, there is no truth in the criticism that denies the Idealism of Christian morality, by representing it as calculating or prudential in its appeal. The hope of the reward for those who endure enters into the prospect. But to represent the promised recompense as of a hedonistic or even mercenary kind, proceeds from a misapprehension of what it imports, and of the nature of the expectations which it encourages. The terrors of future penalty and the crude anticipation of celestial felicities have had a place in Christian preaching

and literature. It may be admitted that they have had a salutary effect upon the lives of those who in their ignorance were scarcely capable of experiencing the force of the genuinely Christian motive and sanctions. If those who have been influenced by such impressions reached a truly Christian level of thought and life, they have outgrown the need of such incentives. No school of ethical thought would accept Paley's definition of virtue as "the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."[1] It may be quite true that "The meek shall inherit the earth," that the Christian type of righteousness succeeds best in the long run, and that those who practise it in their lives lay for themselves a good foundation for the future; but the Kingdom and its righteousness are sought for themselves, first and as the Supreme End. They are not sought with the object of gaining by means of them a recompense other than themselves. To do so would be to subordinate what Christianity proposes as the Highest Good to an ulterior regard for a personal happiness and gain, thus making it not the end but the means. While Christ speaks of a great reward to those who persevere in this righteousness, the tenor of His utterances is to spiritualise the thought of the reward so that it can have value only for those who are already in sympathy with the End. The reward promised to those who hunger

[1] "Mor. and Pol. Phil." Chap. VII.

and thirst after " the righteousness " is that they will reach further attainments in it, that they shall be filled with it (Matt. v. 6). He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive *a prophet's reward* (Matt. x. 41). The servants who traded with the talents entrusted to them were recompensed in accordance with the results of their diligence and fidelity ; but the award consisted in their promotion to positions of higher responsibility, calling for effort of a more arduous kind : " Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things." The reward is not a payment or a prize, with which the winner might retire, to enjoy it with a selfish satisfaction. It rather consists in continuing in the service, and in increased opportunity in it. The Christian motive and incentive are the hope of " more life and higher," of the enlarging capacities and possibilities of " the life " which is on the way towards the attainment of the Supreme End and Ideal as realised in Christ. He rebuked self-interested inquiries as to who should be greatest, as to who should obtain such a recompense as would satisfy mundane desires and ambitions. Those who asked this question revealed their misunderstanding of the task before them, and of the true meaning of " the life " on which they had entered. So far from seeking to attract by prospects alluring to the natural man, He emphasised the dangers and difficulties besetting the path of the true life. Mohammed promised a Paradise replete

with pleasures to those who signalised their fidelity to the cause of Islam. Christ was reticent regarding the conditions of the life to come. But while the ideal Good, the End, is to be sought for itself, He represents it as a blessed End,—such that each individual, seeking and finding it, shall recognise in his experience that to him personally it is an absolute Good, including all that can be desired as good. God Himself is perfectly blessed, because He is perfectly good. In the Christian conception of God, the divine blessedness is an essential element in the divine perfection. The Supreme Good could not be man's Absolute End if he did not seek it as supremely good for him. He could not desire it above all else unless he could represent it to himself as in itself supremely to be desired. No aim could be proposed by man to himself as his absolute End, which he could think of as possibly involving any element of injury and imperfection. The chief end must be that in which he finds the complete satisfaction of his being. It must include the fullness of life and joy. It is not a question of "making the best of both worlds," but of having now the life which consists in a continuous approximation to the End and Ideal in Christ. Viewed from the Christian standpoint, the reward is given to each in the measure in which the Kingdom, with all that it implies, is realised in his inner life and progresses in the world. The final reward is "life" in its fullness in that Kingdom of perfect righteousness,

in which man attains his true destiny, and which is the fulfilment of the divine purpose with humanity and with the world.

It is the task of the historian to estimate the results of the Christian Ethical Ideal in the world, and the extent to which it has leavened human life and institutions. It is indisputable that its influence has been great and fruitful in the lives of individuals and in Society. It has exerted a powerful moral uplift towards higher conditions of thought and life in those peoples to whom it has been made known, supported as it is by the sanctions of a pure and Spiritual Religion. It has fostered the social and humane virtues and those qualities that make for peace and brotherhood. Many would claim that to its presence is due all that is best and highest in our modern civilization. The abolition of slavery may be cited as a triumph of the Christian spirit over material obstacles that once seemed insurmountable. Credit is due to it for much of the increasing sense of man's duty to his fellow-men, especially to the poor, the suffering and the oppressed. It has done much to exorcise the spirit of Cain. The desire of peace among the Nations, the disrepute into which the appeal to mere force has fallen, the sense of man's responsibilities to others as distinguished from his claims upon others, are manifestations of its influence; and it is perhaps

in these directions that its effects are most visible in our times.

There is no means of judging what the Ethical condition of the peoples of Christendom would have been, if the leaven of Christianity had not been operative among them. Yet it is evident that the Christian Ideal, when all is said, has made but partial progress in transforming into its own image either the character of individuals or the life of society. Far from implying its failure, however, this tardy advance is what might have been anticipated in view of those restrictions and hindrances to it, arising from human nature as it is, and from the present world order. Finality, perfect realisation belongs to the future. There can be no " rest and be thankful " in the moral quest. Its aim is a divine Righteousness which cannot be fully realised until " the former things have passed away," and " that which is perfect has come," and therefore not in this present world as it is and seems likely long to continue to be. We may believe that the nineteen centuries that are past are but a brief period compared with the time that is still before the race; but God has eternity in which to accomplish His whole moral purpose. At the stage to which that " increasing purpose " has been as yet brought, it is because of the Idealism of Christian Ethics that it can claim to prescribe the lines on which man's moral advance must continue to proceed towards the divine End. As in the past so in the future,

the wealth of moral truth implicit in the Christian Ideal will wait to be unfolded and appropriated, that under its guidance man may go onwards along the path towards the goal that is ever before him. That End and Highest Good is in the realm of the eternal, immortal and invisible, and it cannot be fully attained in human experience until the Kingdom of the world shall have become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ.[1]

[1] Rev. xi. 15.

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